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VOLUME 10

*CRITICAL SKETCHES OF SOME OF THE  
FEDERAL AND CONFEDERATE  
COMMANDERS*



# CRITICAL SKETCHES

OF SOME OF

## THE FEDERAL AND CONFEDERATE COMMANDERS

EDITED BY

THEODORE F. DWIGHT

PUBLISHED FOR THE MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
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THE papers read before the Military Historical Society of Massachusetts, for the most part, have not been prepared to accord with a preconcerted plan, or with a view to publication. In the process of classification they have arranged themselves in distinctive groups, as set forth in the scheme which appears herein opposite the title-page, illustrating, somewhat connectedly, the operations of the armies in Virginia and of other armies in other parts of the wide region of war.

The memoirs in this volume form, in a measure, an epitome of the history of the four years of conflict, as seen from different points of view, in special relation to the leaders and commanders of the greater campaigns, and will serve as an introduction to the monographs on those campaigns in the volumes which will follow in due season.

Had the project of the volume been earlier conceived, an effort would have been made to obtain similar critical estimates of other distinguished commanders, upon whom, in crucial moments, the fortunes of the North and of the South depended; to supply some of the deficiencies in the archives of the Society, in this respect, and to extend the range of view, Mr. Ropes has kindly permitted the addition of five reviews printed by him in the "Atlantic Monthly" and "Scribner's Magazine." To the publishers of the magazines acknowledgment for the privilege of republishing these reviews is gratefully made.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS.

---

LIST OF BOOKS CITED . . . . .	ix
GENERAL BEAUREGARD	
By JOHN C. ROPES, Esq. . . . .	1
GENERAL GRANT	
By COLONEL THEODORE A. DODGE . . . . .	21
GENERAL HANCOCK	
By GENERAL FRANCIS A. WALKER . . . . .	47
GENERAL HUMPHREYS	
By GENERAL JAMES H. WILSON . . . . .	69
GENERAL McCLELLAN	
By JOHN C. ROPES, Esq. . . . .	97
GENERAL SHERMAN	
By JOHN C. ROPES, Esq. . . . .	125
GENERAL STUART	
By JOHN C. ROPES, Esq. . . . .	153
GENERAL THOMAS	
By COLONEL HENRY STONE . . . . .	163
GENERAL THOMAS IN THE RECORD	
By COLONEL THOMAS L. LIVERMORE . . . . .	209
THE WAR AS WE SEE IT NOW	
By JOHN C. ROPES, Esq. . . . .	245
INDEX . . . . .	273
OFFICERS OF THE MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MASSACHUSETTS, 1876-1895 . . . . .	
LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY, 1895 . . . . .	322
LIST OF REPORTS AND PAPERS READ BEFORE THE SO- CIETY, 1876-1895 . . . . .	339





BOOKS CITED IN THIS VOLUME,  
AND THE FORMS OF REFERENCE.

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Until the publication of Vol. XXIV., Part I., the volumes bore only the particular series designations in Roman numerals. As the references to the earlier volumes have been made in this book by their serial numbers, a table harmonizing the same with their series designations is here given for the convenience of the student.

Series Nos.	Serial Nos.	Series Nos.	Serial Nos.	
I. . . . .	1	XIV. . . . .	20	
II. . . . .	2	XV. . . . .	21	
III. . . . .	3	XVI. { Part I. . . . .	22	
IV. . . . .	4		Part II. . . . .	23
V. . . . .	5	XVII. { Part I. . . . .	24	
VI. . . . .	6		Part II. . . . .	25
VII. . . . .	7	XVIII. . . . .	26	
VIII. . . . .	8	XIX. { Part I. . . . .	27	
IX. . . . .	9		Part II. . . . .	28
X. { Part I. . . . .	10	XX. { Part I. . . . .	29	
	Part II. . . . .		11	Part II. . . . .
XI. { Part I. . . . .	12	XXI. . . . .	31	
	Part II. . . . .	XXII. { Part I. . . . .	32	
	Part III. . . . .		14	Part II. . . . .
XII. { Part I. . . . .	15	XXIII. { Part I. . . . .	34	
	Part II. . . . .		16	Part II. . . . .
	Part II., part II. . . . .	17	XXIV. { Part I. . . . .	36
	Part III. . . . .	18		Part II. . . . .
XIII. . . . .	19	Part III. . . . .	38	

GENERAL BEAUREGARD.

BY

JOHN CODMAN ROPES.

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*Reprinted by permission from the "Atlantic Monthly," for April, 1884.*



## GENERAL BEAUREGARD.

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WE have before us the military operations of General Beauregard<sup>1</sup> detailed in two large octavos. A considerable part of each volume consists of an appendix, containing official and other documents, many of them of great interest. There are excellent indices at the end of the second volume, both of the text and the documents. There are two portraits of the subject of the memoir.

Colonel Roman has written a careful and exhaustive biography of his chief. Beauregard, in the preface, indorses all his statements and comments, excepting only his eulogiums upon Beauregard himself. The book is, we are obliged to say, unnecessarily long; there is a good deal of repetition in it, and many episodes, especially those involving the personal differences between General Beauregard and President Davis, are, in our judgment, dwelt upon with needless particularity. But the work is unquestionably a very valuable contribution to the history of the late war; and from the standpoint of the student, it may well be that, looking at it as in great part consisting of *mémoires pour servir*, there is no excess either of material or of comment.

No officer in the Confederate service had such a varied experience as Beauregard. From the capture of Fort Sumter

<sup>1</sup> The Military Operations of General Beauregard in the War between the States, 1861 to 1865. Including a brief personal sketch and a narrative of his services in the war with Mexico, 1846-48. By Alfred Roman, formerly Colonel of the 18th Louisiana Volunteers, afterwards Aide-de-Camp and Inspector-General on the staff of General Beauregard. In two volumes. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1884.

to the surrender of Johnston, he was almost constantly in active service, and it was his fortune to be connected with several of the most important and picturesque events of the war. It was under his direction and control that the militia of South Carolina surrounded Fort Sumter with their batteries and compelled its surrender. It was he who, with General Joseph E. Johnston, fought and won the first battle of Bull Run, the cause of so much unfounded rejoicing, and the parent of so much vain confidence. It was he who, with General Albert Sidney Johnston, planned and carried out the brilliant and almost completely successful attack upon Grant's position at Pittsburg Landing, the first of a series of hard-fought, sanguinary, and indecisive engagements, of which our war furnished so many examples. It was through Beauregard's indomitable spirit and masterly engineering skill that Fort Sumter and Charleston were so stoutly defended against the ironclads of Admiral Dahlgren and the batteries of General Gillmore. It was due to Beauregard's obstinate resolution that Petersburg was not taken on the 16th and 17th of June, 1864, and the evacuation of Richmond anticipated by nearly a year. Finally, we find him again associated with Joseph E. Johnston, collecting the scattered and decimated forces of the tottering Confederacy, in the vain hope of arresting Sherman's march through the Carolinas, until the surrender at Greensboro' ended the career begun at Sumter and Bull Run. Wherever we see him we find him active, enterprising, daring, — in fact, to the verge of rashness; extremely methodical also, and most industrious. He impresses us as a man devoted to his profession, and simply to his profession. He does not seem to have been hampered by any of those feelings of responsibility, arising from a mingling of the duties of soldier and statesman, which to a greater or less extent undoubtedly influenced the judgment of some of the most prominent generals on either side. Beauregard appears always to have preserved a perfectly clear military head; he

was always capable of advising the most unwelcome measures, when he thought they were demanded by the situation ; to him Richmond even, and Charleston, were only squares on the military chessboard. We shall have occasion to advert to this subject further on. Let us now briefly follow General Beauregard through the war.

After his reduction of Fort Sumter, with which we will not detain the reader, we find Beauregard in command of the main body of the Confederate forces at Manassas Junction, and Joseph E. Johnston in command of the troops in the Shenandoah Valley. The principal Federal army, under McDowell, lay in front of Beauregard. Patterson, in the Valley, confronted Johnston. The enemy had adopted, under the advice of General Lee, a strictly defensive policy. Beauregard, on the other hand, advised, as early as the 12th of June, that Johnston should unite his forces with the main body, and that an effort should be made to capture Alexandria and Arlington Heights. But this suggestion was not received by the President with favor,<sup>1</sup> and things went on in the same way for another month, when it became evident that the National forces intended taking the offensive at an early day, and equally plain, at least to General Beauregard, that the advance would be made against his army at Manassas, and not against Johnston's in the Shenandoah Valley. He therefore recommended the immediate transfer of the latter force to the main army. He sent an aide to Richmond on July 14 to represent the danger of a Federal advance with overwhelming numbers and to urge that he should be re-enforced by the bulk of Johnston's army. As soon as this should be done, he proposed to take the offensive against the Federals in front of Washington. But Davis and Lee declined to act upon the suggestion. They may, as Colonel Roman claims, have been wrong ; but it strikes us as probable that the extremely sanguine hue which Beauregard gave to

<sup>1</sup> 2 W. R., 923.

his project, and the predictions of unlimited success which he authorized his aide to make to the President and General Lee, — such as “exterminating” Scott and McDowell, “driving them into the Potomac,” then going to the Valley and “destroying” Patterson, and after this had been achieved re-enforcing Garnett in West Virginia and defeating McClellan, and finally crossing into Maryland, “arousing the people” and attacking Washington, — may have had a good deal to do with their hesitation to take the first step which Beauregard proposed, the transfer to the army at Manassas of the bulk of the forces in the Valley. In fact, Beauregard’s imagination, while it often enabled him to foresee the movements of the enemy with really astonishing accuracy, and to find ways and means of counteracting them, was generally allowed too prominent a place in his projects. Beauregard had a great deal of the sanguine and excitable nature of a Frenchman about him; and this quality, together with his never-failing and always expressed belief that the course which he advocated would be followed by complete and overwhelming success, undoubtedly jarred upon the nerves of the elderly Anglo-Saxon military men, Davis, Lee, Johnston, and the rest with whom he had to do, and created in their minds a feeling of distrust, which most of our readers will not fail to understand, and even, to a certain extent, to sympathize with. Still, there can be no doubt that Mr. Davis and his advisers allowed their prejudices to carry them too far. Beauregard, in his advice to them at this time, as afterwards on other and also important occasions, was supplying a want which none of them could supply. In imagination, in enterprise, in daring, he was their superior. His suggestions were, moreover, the suggestions of a trained military mind, in possession of all the facts of the case which could be at that time ascertained; and so far as concerned the first step which he recommended, — that the bulk of Johnston’s forces should be at once transferred to his own command, — he was not only right, but the



peril against which he was urging them to provide was even more imminent than any one then supposed.

Beauregard's advice, as we have seen, was given on Sunday, the 14th. On Tuesday, the 16th, McDowell began his march. On the 17th he occupied Fairfax Court House. Not till then was Johnston ordered to join Beauregard, and no part of his troops arrived till the 20th. A portion, as is well known, came up on Sunday afternoon, the 21st, while the battle was in full progress; and had McDowell been able to adhere to his original plan of attacking the enemy's right, at Blackburn's and Mitchell's Fords, and below them, the battle must have taken place before a single regiment of Johnston's command had reached Manassas Junction, or Beauregard must have fallen back without a fight, which is perhaps more probable.

It appears that the idea of a pursuit of the Federal forces after the rout at Bull Run was never entertained, either by Davis, Johnston, or Beauregard; the want of transportation rendered it out of the question. But about the last of September, 1861, both Johnston and Beauregard strongly urged that the strength of the army should be raised to sixty thousand men, and that the war should be carried into Maryland. The plan was to cross at Edwards's or Conrad's Ferry, and then to march on Washington; relying on the greater cohesion and *elan* of the Southern army to defeat the then raw troops of General McClellan. But Mr. Davis refused his assent, and the project was abandoned.

We next find Beauregard sent to the West, where Albert Sidney Johnston had suffered serious reverses. Forts Henry and Donelson had been taken, with many guns and thousands of prisoners. The States of Kentucky and Tennessee had been nearly abandoned; the Mississippi had been opened as far as Island No. 10; the Confederate forces had been widely separated. In this state of things, Johnston and Beauregard conceived the brilliant plan of reuniting at the earliest mo-

ment the wings of the army; calling up all outlying detachments and all possible re-enforcements, and attacking the Federal army under Grant before it could be augmented by the forces of Buell. We do not care to discuss the question how the merit of this plan is to be apportioned. Suffice it to say that both commanders entered heartily into it, and that their daring scheme for the rehabilitation of the Confederate cause in the West was gallantly supported by their troops. The battle of Shiloh, fought on April 6, 7, 1862, was a battle of the old-fashioned kind, — a pitched battle; and after the advantage which the Confederates derived from their surprise of our army had been exhausted, it was a very hard-fought battle. It was a new experience to the troops on both sides, and was an education in itself.

Beauregard has been criticised for not having accomplished more on the first day; but we fail to see that anything more was possible.

Corinth, a very important railway and strategic centre, to which Beauregard retreated after the battle, was held against Halleck and his greatly superior force until May 30, when Beauregard drew off his army in excellent order and condition. His health now requiring attention, he was relieved from duty. We find him next at Charleston, where he arrived in September of the same year. Here he was already well known and highly thought of; and here, too, was a chance for him to display those resources of engineering art which he possessed in so great a degree. The autumn and winter were occupied in providing for the assaults which were sure to be made in the ensuing spring. Beauregard's activity, industry and skill were never displayed on a better field. Finally the long-expected blow was delivered. On April 7, 1863, Admiral Dupont, with a fleet of ironclads, attacked Fort Sumter; but after some hours of gallant and determined fighting, the ships were obliged to confess themselves beaten by the forts.

Two months after this event General Gillmore superseded General Hunter in charge of the land operations against Charleston. We observe that General Beauregard considers that his plan of attack was faulty. "It was fortunate," says Colonel Roman, speaking the views of General Beauregard, "that, shortly afterwards, the new commanding general, on whose daring and engineering ability the North greatly relied, preferred making his attack by Morris Island, instead of on the broad and weak front of James Island, where he might have penetrated our long, attenuated lines, and taken Charleston in flank and rear. Nothing then could have prevented Sumter from falling; for there can be no doubt that General Gillmore would have immediately increased the armament at and around Fort Johnson, and have thus completely commanded the interior harbor. The possession of Charleston and of all the South Carolina seacoast would have followed as a necessary sequence." It is not for us to decide between two such authorities, but merely to state the different views. That Gillmore's opponent should entertain the view that his plan was a faulty one in its conception is certainly an interesting fact.

Whether General Gillmore did or did not adopt the proper line of attack, it is undeniable that Beauregard foiled him in his efforts to take Sumter and to capture Charleston. Sumter, its batteries silenced, was, it is true, reduced to something very much resembling a pile of stones and rubbish; but the Confederate flag on the flagstaff on its summit was daily saluted, night and morning, until the march of Sherman through South Carolina forced the evacuation of Charleston and its forts. And the book before us gives an interesting account of the marvellous daring, and the equally marvellous engineering skill and fertility of resource, by which the cradle of secession was for so long a period defended against its powerful antagonists.

By the spring of 1864 the Federal operations against

Charleston had virtually ceased. It was considered impracticable to effect anything further without the aid of a more powerful land force; and the plans of the government contemplated the employment in Virginia of General Gillmore himself, and of a large portion of the troops which he had been commanding in the Department of the South. In April Beauregard was also ordered to Virginia, to assist in the defence of Richmond.

General Grant, who had recently been placed at the head of all the armies of the United States, had determined to accompany the Army of the Potomac in its march from the Rapidan upon Richmond. He had also prepared an auxiliary expedition under General Butler, which should land at City Point, where the Appomattox empties into the James. Butler was instructed to make Richmond his "objective point."<sup>1</sup>

Of all this, nothing, of course, was known at Richmond. But the somewhat ostentatious reorganization of the Ninth Corps, at Annapolis, awakened the suspicions of General Beauregard. He scented danger in the air. He felt sure that the Federal Generals intended to make a bold and vigorous campaign, and he was fully alive to the exposed condition of Petersburg and Richmond. But at this moment, just on the eve of the campaign, just when the Confederate government should have been completing their preparations for the defence of the capital and its approaches, he finds they have denuded Petersburg of troops in an ill-advised attempt to recapture Newbern, North Carolina. On the 22d of April, 1864, he arrived at Weldon; on the 25th he urged upon General Bragg, then commanding the forces of the Confederacy, under the supervision of President Davis, the probability of an immediate attack upon Richmond and Petersburg, and the danger of scattering the forces of the department. But his representations were of no avail. Full of the

<sup>1</sup> 67 W. R., 16.

project of repossessing themselves of the coast of North Carolina, the administration disregarded Beauregard's advice, until, on the 4th of May, Butler, with 30,000 men, had landed at Bermuda Hundred. Then, indeed, there was a hurried concentration. From Plymouth and the Neuse, from Wilmington and from Charleston, troops were hurried up to Richmond "with the greatest despatch." "There was," as Davis said in his telegram of May 4, "not an hour to lose."

Fortunately for the Confederates, the expedition to Bermuda Hundred was not under the direction of an able and enterprising soldier. There was a delay of a few days before anything was even attempted, and then the attempt was a poor affair. Two good officers of the regular army, commanded by a civilian general, did not make a strong board of direction. Beauregard had leisure to collect his forces. By the time he was ready to strike — for his usual policy, and it was generally a good one, and it proved an especially wise one in the present case, was to take the offensive — he found that our troops had advanced towards Richmond from Bermuda Hundred, had taken possession of the Petersburg and Richmond railroad, and were facing north; their line extending from the river on the right, not far from Drury's Bluff, to a point beyond the railroad in a westerly direction. Between this line and Richmond was the little army of Beauregard. In Petersburg was a Confederate division under Major-General Whiting. Beauregard's plan was to make his main attack on our extreme right, close to the river, and so cut us off from our base at Bermuda Hundred, while Whiting's division was to assault us in rear. The result was a serious defeat for our forces, which would doubtless have been a more crushing one had Whiting's division participated in the action. But owing, it is said, to the fault of that officer, this part of the plan was not carried out.

The outcome of this brilliant affair was that General

Butler's operations came abruptly to an end. He retired to Bermuda Hundred, fortifying the short neck of land between the James and the Appomattox which constituted the westerly line of his position; and, when Beauregard had constructed a like series of works opposite to his, "his army," to use General Grant's celebrated phrase, "though in a position of great security, was as completely shut off from further operations directly against Richmond as if it had been in a bottle strongly corked."<sup>1</sup> Having for the time being thus disposed of the immediate danger, Beauregard made, on the 18th of May, one of his characteristic proposals to the Confederate war department.

Lee and Grant were confronting each other at Spottsylvania, some fifty or sixty miles from Richmond. This proposition shows so well the military sagacity of Beauregard that we venture to copy the greater part of his letter: —

*Memorandum.* The crisis demands prompt and decisive action. The two armies are now too far apart to secure success, unless we consent to give up Petersburg, and thus place the capital in jeopardy. If General Lee will fall back behind the Chickahominy, engaging the enemy so as to draw him on, General Beauregard can bring up 15,000 men to unite with Breckinridge [who had been sent for from the Valley] and fall upon the enemy's flank with over 20,000 effectives, thus rendering Grant's defeat certain and decisive, and in time to enable General Beauregard to return with re-enforcements from General Lee to drive Butler from before Petersburg and from his present position in advance of Bermuda Hundred. Petersburg and Richmond could be held three days, or four at most, by the forces left there for that purpose. Without such concentration nothing decisive can be effected, and the picture presented is one of ultimate starvation. Without concentration General Lee must eventually fall back before Grant's heavy re-enforce-

<sup>1</sup> 67 W. R., 20.

ments, whereas the plan presented merely anticipates this movement for offensive purposes.”<sup>1</sup>

It certainly may be said that, had this plan been carried out, the battle would have been fought when the army under Grant was by no means as strong as it was on the day of Cold Harbor. But whether the united forces of Lee and Beauregard could have inflicted a “decisive” defeat upon the Army of the Potomac, entrenched as it would unquestionably have been, we take the liberty, *pace* General Beauregard, to doubt. Yet it must be borne in mind that what he predicted in this memorandum actually came to pass. True it was that without such a concentration as he urged nothing could be effected, and that “the picture presented was one of ultimate starvation;” that is, of inaction and decay, resulting in inevitable and utter failure. It may well be that Beauregard’s counsel was not only bold but wise.

No attention seems to have been paid to it,<sup>2</sup> however, and the armies of Grant and Lee occupied a fortnight in getting down to Cold Harbor; the re-enforcements received by Grant during this time largely exceeding those received by Lee. To fight his great battle Grant took the Eighteenth Corps away from Bermuda Hundred. After he had delivered his ill-advised assault on the lines of Cold Harbor, there was for a time a lull in the progress of the campaign. But this was merely to concert a scheme, by which Grant hoped to seize Petersburg with his whole army, while Lee was still on the north bank of the James. This masterly movement, the successful accomplishment of which has been generally overlooked in considering the extremely unsatisfactory performances of the Federal army after it had arrived before Petersburg, was begun on the 12th of June.

<sup>1</sup> 68 W. R., 1021.

<sup>2</sup> It was sent to Seddon, Secretary of War, by Bragg, May 19 (68 W. R., 1023), with adverse comments for President Davis (*Ib.*, 1024); and Seddon took no action on the plan (*Ib.*, 1025).

General Grant saw that unless he could induce General Lee to believe that he was aiming at Richmond his object would not be achieved. Therefore, after breaking camp at Cold Harbor, he manœuvred so skilfully on the Chickahominy and near Charles City Cross Roads that he completely deceived his adversary, both as to his whereabouts and his intentions. Smith's corps, the Eighteenth, was put on transports, and sent back to Bermuda Hundred, where it arrived on the 14th, and moved at once upon Petersburg. A pontoon bridge was laid across the James at Windmill Point, below the junction with the Appomattox, and the Second Corps, under General Hancock, despite an entirely unnecessary delay at the crossing, for which nobody seems to have been responsible, reached, with two divisions, the outer works of Petersburg about dark on the 15th, just after Smith, who had come up before noon, had succeeded in capturing them.

Ever since the 7th, Beauregard had foreseen this movement of Grant's. He had been obliged to weaken his small force by sending Hoke's division and two brigades of Johnston's division to Lee, in anticipation of the battle of Cold Harbor; and all that he had to depend upon was the remainder of Johnston's division, which was in front of Bermuda Hundred, and Wise's brigade, Dearing's cavalry, and a few militia at Petersburg. On the 7th he begged Bragg to return his troops from Lee's army, expressing his belief that "Grant . . . doubtless intends operations against Richmond along James River, probably on south side."<sup>1</sup> On the 9th he wrote a careful memorandum to General Bragg, suggesting that Grant would probably operate from Bermuda Hundred as a base against Petersburg.<sup>2</sup> At last, on the very morning when Smith's corps appeared before Petersburg, Hoke's division was allowed to leave Drury's Bluff for Petersburg. It arrived just in time for one of its brigades to participate in the withdrawal of the troops of Wise from the outer

<sup>1</sup> 69 W. R., 878.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, 886.



line, which Smith had broken in the afternoon. Beauregard instantly decided that the enemy's main attack was against Petersburg, and he at once withdrew Johnston's division from the lines at Bermuda Hundred. Gracie's brigade also arrived from Lee's army. His forces did not exceed 15,000 men. Colonel Roman puts them at a "total effective of about 10,000 men," but we think the larger number is nearer the fact.

But not only were the Eighteenth Corps and two divisions of the Second Corps the assailants of Petersburg. On the morning of the 16th of June the remaining division of the Second Corps appeared, and, soon after, the Ninth Corps, one division (Neill's) of the Sixth (the other two being sent to Bermuda Hundred), and, later in the day, the Fifth Corps. One division of the Eighteenth Corps was, however, sent to Bermuda Hundred.

Beauregard's little force maintained such a firm front, and held still such advanced positions, that the Federal generals were deceived as to its strength. It was not till dark on the 16th that an assault was ordered. It was measurably successful. But although a portion of the lines was carried, the remainder was obstinately held, and attempt after attempt was made during the night to recover the lost ground. The next morning, the 17th, Potter's division of the Ninth Corps made a brilliant assault on the left of our line, capturing guns and prisoners; but there was no proper provision to support the attack, although the Fifth Corps was lying idle on the left of the Ninth. The other two white divisions of the Ninth Corps were put in during the day and evening; but they were put in one after the other, without being supported to any effective degree either by each other or by the corps on the left and right, the Fifth and Second. The first division of the Ninth Corps, for instance, made a brilliant charge at dusk, and captured the enemy's works; but it was allowed to be driven out again, for want of re-enforcements and ammu-

dition. On our right, the Second and Sixth Corps won some important ground, but their generals seem to have remained satisfied with very inadequate results. In fact, while allowance must of course be made for the fatigue of the troops, it is really impossible to understand the utter failure of the Army of the Potomac to improve its golden opportunity of taking Petersburg on June 16 and 17, except on the hypothesis that Beauregard's handling of his forces completely deceived our commanders. His policy was so daring that his adversaries supposed they were fighting the whole or a large part of the army of General Lee. No one could imagine that with 12,000 or 15,000 men a general would undertake to hold such an extended front, to stick so obstinately to weak and untenable positions, to try repeatedly by desperate counter-assaults to recapture the ground which had been wrested from him. The tactics of the Confederate general were bold indeed. Had the Fifth Corps, at any time while the rest of the army was engaging Beauregard's forces, marched up the Jerusalem Plank Road into Petersburg, the whole game would have been up. But this seems not to have been even thought of. We repeat that it is no wonder that the unaccountable failure of the Army of the Potomac to accomplish anything of moment during these two days has obscured the brilliant strategy by which the army had these two days given to it in which to make itself master of Petersburg.

For, during all this time, Lee was on the north side of the James, fully expecting that Grant intended a direct move on Richmond. Able as Lee undoubtedly was, he failed on this occasion to divine his opponent's scheme. Nor could Beauregard rouse him to a sense of the danger of the situation. Despatch after despatch, aide after aide, were sent to Richmond; but the alarming news they brought was attributed to Beauregard's too fertile imagination. Among the most curious stories in the book are those of the staff

officers whom Beauregard sent at this time to General Lee. It was not till Beauregard telegraphed, on the 17th, that, unless re-enforced, he would have to evacuate Petersburg by noon of the next day, that Lee consented to move to Petersburg; and even then he expressed himself as "not yet satisfied of General Grant's movements."<sup>1</sup>

On the morning of Saturday, the 18th, accordingly, General Lee's army began to appear. On that day the same fatality pursued the Federal leaders as had marked their doings for the preceding forty-eight hours. Meade's order to attack at daybreak, which could have been and ought to have been carried out to the letter, would even then have gained us the possession of Petersburg. When our troops moved, early on Saturday morning, they found the lines of the night before abandoned; in pressing on, they allowed themselves to be detained by the enemy's skirmishers; finally, they arrived in front of the formidable positions, near the city itself, on which Beauregard, with excellent judgment, had placed his little force, and which were the positions held to the end of the war. Here our corps commanders saw fit to halt; and while they were thus delaying in front of the thin lines of Beauregard, — which at that moment they could either have broken by a direct assault, or have turned by way of the Jerusalem Road, — the gallant little force which had so well defended Petersburg was re-enforced by the Army of Northern Virginia. At half past 10 o'clock in the morning appeared General Lee himself, at the head of Kershaw's division. And when, after a sufficient time had been spent in making preparation, the Federal army delivered their assault, it was a total failure. Despite of the greatest courage and self-devotion on the part of both officers and men, we were repulsed at every point with great slaughter. Our want of enterprise had cost us dear.

Beauregard was in Petersburg at the time of the explosion

<sup>1</sup> 2 Roman's Beauregard, 582; cf. 81 W. R., 664.

of the mine, on the 30th of July, 1864, and Colonel Roman gives us much that is interesting and valuable in regard to that most unfortunate day.

In the autumn of 1864, Beauregard was again sent to the West, to command the armies of Hood and Taylor. His authority over these officers seems not to have been very clearly defined. He certainly took no active part in the disastrous campaign of General Hood.

But in the winter and early spring of 1865 we find him, at first alone, afterwards with his old comrade, Joseph E. Johnston, working hard to get together a respectable force, to arrest the progress of Sherman in the Carolinas. Matters were at a desperate pass for the Southern cause. The "march to the sea" gave the Federals two armies on the Atlantic coast. Sherman left Savannah on the 1st of February, on his march northward, and to the armies of Grant and Lee "there came," as Swinton well says, "rolling across the plains of the Carolinas, beating nearer and nearer, the drums of Champion's Hill and Shiloh!"<sup>1</sup> Unless Sherman could be stopped, the Confederacy was doomed. On the other hand, such was the weariness of the war in the North and in Europe, and so precarious seemed the condition of the Federal finances, that a severe defeat inflicted upon Sherman, while in the Carolinas, might yet, so some sagacious men thought, restore the fallen fortunes of the South. It might accomplish for the Confederacy what was accomplished for the colonies by the bloody and indecisive battle of Guilford Court House, which Greene forced upon Cornwallis in March, 1781.

But to effect this required the instant adoption of a policy of concentration. Augusta, Columbia, Goldsboro', Wilmington, Charleston, — even, as Beauregard thought, Richmond itself, — should be abandoned at once. Any and every sacrifice of local feeling should be unhesitatingly made. No associations were too sacred to be given up, if only a force

<sup>1</sup> Swinton, *Decisive Battles*, 480.

could be raised capable of coping with Sherman's powerful and well-appointed army. This policy Beauregard strongly advocated. He soon, however, found obstacles in his way. The Confederacy had deeply felt the loss of Savannah. But to abandon Charleston was too terrible even to think of. General Hardee doubted and delayed at the last moment. Davis ordered him to postpone the evacuation of the city as long as was prudent, hoping "to save the pain of seeing it pass into the hands of the enemy." From causes like this, Beauregard's policy was blocked at every stage; the result fell far short of his hopes. Sherman, in the mean time, was steadily pursuing his onward course. He compelled the evacuation of Augusta, Columbia, Charleston and Wilmington, as an inevitable consequence of his admirable strategy. He completely deceived his adversaries as to his real intentions; he kept them separated from each other; and it was not until his masterly march from Savannah to Goldsboro' was well-nigh completed that Johnston, who had succeeded Beauregard in command, was able to strike the well-meant but feeble blows of Bentonville and Averysboro'. Sherman had deserved his success.

After the evacuation of Richmond and the surrender of General Lee, Mr. Davis had an interview with Johnston and Beauregard at Greensboro', North Carolina. Of this interview General Johnston, in the appendix to the second volume,<sup>1</sup> gives a curious account. The military men were all of a mind. They considered the situation as hopeless, and so expressed themselves. With them agreed the Secretary of War, Breckinridge, and all the members of the cabinet except the President and Mr. Benjamin. The latter, General Johnston says, "repeated something very like Sempronius's speech for war. Mr. Davis," the General goes on to say, "received these suggestions of mine as if annoyed by them." Beauregard reports that the President said that the struggle

<sup>1</sup> 2 Roman's Beauregard, 664.

could still be carried on to a successful issue by bringing out all the latent resources of the Confederacy, and, if necessary, by crossing the Mississippi and uniting with Kirby Smith's forces. But he was finally compelled to hear reason, and General Johnston was permitted to open negotiations with Sherman.

Here we leave our subject. It needs not to be said that Colonel Roman's book is a very important contribution to our history; that no library which aims at getting together the important works on the late war can omit it. It is long, and it is written with more minuteness on certain topics than seems to us to be necessary. But there may well be questions in the investigation of which one would find that these pains had all been well bestowed. The book bears throughout abundant evidence of a very strong feeling against the late President of the Southern Confederacy. We have purposely refrained from bringing this feature into prominence; nor do we deem it necessary to say more here than that the reader will find in this work many grave charges of inefficiency, obstinacy and prejudice against the administration of Mr. Davis, and a good deal of evidence in their favor.

GRANT AS A SOLDIER.

BY

THEODORE AYRAULT DODGE,

BREVET LIEUTENANT-COLONEL, U. S. A.

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*Read before the Society on Monday evening, April 14, 1884.*

The following are the titles of books by Colonel Dodge, concerning the Civil War: —

A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF OUR CIVIL WAR. Boston: James R. Osgood and Company. 1883.

THE CAMPAIGN OF CHANCELLORSVILLE. Second edition. Boston: Ticknor and Company. 1881.



## GRANT AS A SOLDIER.

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THE proper rank of Ulysses S. Grant as a soldier is far from easy to determine. Possessing in an eminent degree some of the qualifications which go to make up a great captain, he yet showed during his military career, on more than one occasion, a singular lack of aptitude in using what are recognized as the best methods of modern war. His few brilliant successes were won against generals of confessedly second-rate capacity; and when he met opponents of acknowledged strength, he accomplished the results he aimed at only with the aid of largely preponderating forces. It cannot be denied that Grant did accomplish a vast work during our Civil War; but are we to ascribe his achievements to his own military skill, or to attendant favorable conditions? Recognizing as fully as any one the eminent services of General Grant, mindful of that singularly self-contained power which compelled from all his subordinates an unreserved and trusting admiration, the few suggestions laid before you in this paper are made rather with the purpose of calling out the views of others than as throwing any additional light on this much mooted question. As a mere question, it is of interest. General Grant was the finally successful leader of our armies during one of the greatest of modern wars; he commanded in civilized warfare greater armies than any other general ever led; he won where all before him had failed. Despite all which, there is more disagreement as to the ability shown in his campaigns than exists with reference to those of any other of our generals. If no more

can be done, it is well to gather together all the elements which go to make up a satisfactory record of his talent as a soldier. Much that will be said is by no means new; but the mere assembling of some facts and opinions may lead others to arrive at a more satisfactory conclusion. A hasty glance at Grant's history, from 1861 to 1865, though it must of necessity be extremely superficial, is perhaps the easiest method of arriving at this end.

The affair at Belmont (November, 1861) was the first occasion on which Grant measured swords with the enemy. There appears to have been no controlling reason for this expedition. In all of Grant's subsequent work, he seems to have had in view a very definite object which he was wont often to pursue in the face of difficulties, and which would have sent most other men to the right-about. The alleged purpose of the Belmont demonstration was to prevent Polk at Columbus from sending re-enforcements to Price in Missouri; but an attack on Columbus itself would appear to have been the proper way to accomplish this result. Belmont was at the mercy of the guns of Columbus, and could under no circumstances be held. It almost seems as if the excuse for the expedition was that of the man in Scripture who had bought two yoke of oxen, and must fain go and try them. Grant had been entrusted with new weapons. He thought to essay them before venturing into a serious affray. As a simple demonstration, the affair was not noteworthy. Nor does it shed any light upon our subject of inquiry, except that it early showed that Grant possessed coolness and self-reliance.

Despite his impassive exterior, Grant was really of a restless disposition. Perhaps his most prominent quality, except the dogged persistence he so constantly exhibited, was his desire to be always at work, pushing the enemy at some point. He never seemed to need recuperation for himself; he was apparently never overtaxed; he worked with the weapons

he found at hand. He never asked for re-enforcements ; and he was wont to deny his troops those periods of rest which it was a not always happy rule in all our other armies to afford them in such ample measure.

Some attempt has been made to deny Grant the credit of the successes against the Confederate first line of defence, broken in February, 1862, at Forts Henry and Donelson ; but he may be safely awarded a goodly share thereof. The capture of Fort Henry is deserving of notice only in that Tilghman delayed the Federal advance till the bulk of his force had escaped. The affair was not of long duration and it reflects no discredit on Grant that he was there thwarted. The attack on Fort Donelson was stubborn. Grant undertook the work with a force less than that of the enemy, though he was later re-enforced to an effective beyond theirs. The obstacles were considerable, both of ground and weather, and he led but the rawest of troops. It cannot be denied that the fighting was spirited, and creditable in the extreme to new levies, as shown by the loss of 2300 men. But Grant's victory here was primarily due to the divided responsibilities of the threefold command of the Confederates. Such men as Floyd, Buckner and Pillow were scarcely worthy of being called adversaries, while the scene before the surrender, in which each of these three men sought to cast the responsibility from off his own shoulders, was disgraceful indeed. Compared with the field of Bull Run, seven months earlier, with vastly greener troops, the fighting showed nothing to excite remark. Even Badeau acknowledges that the North overrated the *means* by the *result*, — the *cause* by the *effect*. But the success won its usual and proper result. It is success which must always command reward. Grant was the hero of the nation.

The only battle, until the campaign of 1864, in which Grant measured weapons with a truly great soldier, now shortly supervened. Grant had advanced up the Tennessee

River, and massed his army at Pittsburg Landing as a threat to Corinth. The place was well chosen. Buell was ordered by Halleck, who controlled this department, across country from Nashville to join forces with Grant. It was purposed to make a descent upon the Confederate army. The enemy was commanded by Albert Sidney Johnston, who was perhaps the most promising soldier in the enemy's ranks. Johnston was not wont to await attack, and decided to fall upon Grant before the arrival of Buell. This he did (April 6, 1862) with a vehemence and initial success which goes far to nullify the claim of even General Sherman, that the army was not surprised. At a later period in the war, that there was a surprise would not have been denied. If the attack was actually expected, it was strange that Grant should be absent — as he was never far from the post of danger — and stranger still, that the outpost service, even in those early days, should have been so raggedly performed. The event at least was to roll up the Union army as it were a scroll; and, had not Johnston been killed before completing his victory, it would have gone hard with our forces, huddled, as they were, into the swamp of Snake Creek. Probably few troops were ever worse demoralized than all but a small leaven of Sherman's men, on the evening of that day. So far, Grant had been defeated by Johnston. Beauregard succeeded to the Confederate command. This officer arrogates to himself the victory of Bull Run; but Beauregard was actually defeated at Bull Run. It was Joe Johnston's fresh troops which turned Beauregard's disaster into a Southern victory. Nor can any person, unless a fulsome biographer, be found who will rank Beauregard high as a soldier. His mistake at Shiloh was certainly Grant's salvation. Albert Sidney Johnston would never have sounded the recall at the moment of victory. He would have pushed home to the bitter end. But Beauregard lost his opportunity, and called off his men, thinking to complete the work on the morrow. Such morrows

never come. During this breathing spell Buell arrived, and the tide of success was turned.

There is nothing in the battle of Shiloh which can be warped into a creditable showing for Grant. He was not ready for battle, his troops were not well in hand, and until his splendid opponent fell he was badly worsted. He was saved only by the happy mistake of a second-rate general, and the still happier arrival of fresh and well-drilled troops. For some months prior to and succeeding the battle of Shiloh, Grant was under a cloud. Accused of disobeying orders and of sundry acts militating against the martinet-like punctilio of Halleck, he was censured, relieved of command, thrust one side while nominally Halleck's second and generally hustled about in an irritating and altogether unreasonable fashion. He bore his trials well, however, though more than once tempted to throw up the game. No man throughout our war rendered more generous service, forgetful of self in every instance where he could accomplish good for the cause, than Grant. In minor stations, as well as in supreme command, this trait was prominent. This testimony to his credit cannot be gainsaid.

Halleck's promotion to Washington again gave Grant his head. From now on he made it his sole aim to open the Mississippi. Upon neither the battle of Iuka nor the battle of Corinth can satisfactory comment be made. The former was an attack by Grant with divided forces, which failed to co-operate, and allowed Price to escape. The latter was perhaps as much Rosecrans's work as Grant's, and was success but narrowly achieved. Grant cannot be judged with fairness by these smaller operations.

The main obstacle to the navigation of the great river was Vicksburg. This fortress continued to be Grant's objective for three quarters of a year (November, 1862, to July, 1863). The capture of Vicksburg from the south had been attempted by Williams in the spring of 1862, and Farragut had been up

the river and had run the batteries to and fro. The canal scheme had been inaugurated by Williams, but was abandoned when he returned to Baton Rouge. It was in November, 1862, when Grant suggested the capture of Vicksburg from his own base, to the General-in-Chief. Some 50,000 men were in this vicinity. At Washington a scheme was on the carpet to give McClernand sole command of an expedition down the Mississippi. Meanwhile Grant was maturing his plans for an advance on Vicksburg overland.

A careful study of the conditions involved, as well as the subsequent operations, seems to indicate as the best route from the Memphis and Charleston Railroad to Vicksburg, one following along the line of the Mobile and Ohio Railroad, or preferably, the Mississippi Central. The latter had, to be sure, several good defensive lines, such as the Tallahatchie and Yallobusha, but these were susceptible of being turned by their head waters, and the right of an advancing army was well protected by the Yazoo lowlands. Grenada could have been made an excellent secondary depot, and the entire northern part of Mississippi would have been rendered tributary to our armies instead of to our enemy. Later, when Grant was in the midst of his eccentric circuit south of Vicksburg, every one came to this conclusion. Success alone justified Grant's manœuvre; and by the difficulties so hardly overcome, an advance overland in one body is clearly shown to have had more to commend it than any other plan. But at that time, Grant appears to have considered a division of forces advantageous instead of faulty. Iuka had failed of any results worth mention for this very reason, but Grant did not bear this in mind. He contemplated, in fact inaugurated, a march with combined forces overland, but the poor supply of rolling-stock along the railroad appears to have determined him otherwise; and lest McClernand should take from his control the Mississippi expedition, he put into immediate execution a dual plan, consisting of an attack from the river

by Sherman, in connection with an advance along the railroad by his own army.

This scheme fairly bristled with elements of failure. No possible communication during the march or at the time of attack could be had between the supposed co-operating forces. In case of disaster to the one, the other could neither have warning to retreat nor opportunity to assist. Neither army was in sufficient force to attack the city single-handed. The distance that each had to travel was so great that the common delays of land or water transportation would put simultaneous aggressive operations quite out of the question. It was almost beyond reason to expect the two plans to work together. If either had been a mere diversion to draw the enemy's opposition from the other, the idea might have been a fair one; but both expeditions were in the nature of attacks in force, and of about equal strength. The opportunities for the enemy were brilliant. Grant did not believe, at that time, that an army could be subsisted on the country, and feared that he could not ration his men on the scanty means afforded by the railroad. Moreover, the McClermand imbroglio was threatening and no doubt weighed heavily in Grant's deliberations. Still all this cannot be held to excuse the adoption of what is the worst possible scheme in all cases. A division of forces requires a background of good luck. It cannot face bad fortune or accidents.

The result of these isolated expeditions was disastrous. Sherman reached Chickasaw Bayou, and, supposing Grant to be either close at hand, or else to be holding Pemberton on the line of the Yallobusha, he unsuccessfully thrust his army in upon well-manned defences. Grant meanwhile, for lack of the very divisions Sherman had carried off, had seen his communications cut at Holly Springs, and had been sent whirling back to his base on the Memphis and Charleston Railroad. We can be scarcely expected to agree with Badeau in the following adulation: "From Belmont, the initial

battle of his career, he [Grant] had never been driven from the field, and had never receded a step in any of his campaigns, except at Holly Springs, and then the rebels were in retreat before him, and Grant, unable to follow them up fast enough to overtake them, withdrew, only to advance on another line."<sup>1</sup> When will biographers learn to appreciate the harm they inflict upon their heroes by comments such as these?

Grant possessed in marvellous degree the power of bearing up against bad luck and disappointment. He showed many of the characteristics of a great man; added the true military instinct, and he would have been a great soldier; but the latter trait is more difficult to unearth, it did not come to the surface in this campaign. There is no doubt that the capacity to do the best thing at the right moment is the test of all skill, and the technical rules of strategy must be secondary to this one thing. Perhaps Stonewall Jackson was the best instance of this truism. But it is well to weigh accurately each rule which is shown by the experience of the greatest soldiers to be of value, before we throw it aside in the special case before us. It has been intimated by some critics that in a wooded country like ours, the well-worn rules of strategy may be laid aside for others suggested by the occasion; but there is nothing in the history of our war which goes to show this true. The tactics of the battlefield, particularly those of the fighting line, must of necessity be as much modified by topographical reasons as they are by improved weapons; but the rules of strategy are as everlasting as the rules of logic.

With characteristic pertinacity, despite his backset, so soon as McClelland had been eliminated from his problem (January, 1863), Grant set his face again toward Vicksburg. This time he determined to operate on the Mississippi line, and to reach the hills which command the town by the route

<sup>1</sup> 3 Badeau, 641.



which Sherman had fruitlessly essayed to tread. This was better than the former plan, but presented fewer advantages than the overland march. It is very apparent that Grant had no definite idea how to compass the capture of Vicksburg, when he established himself at Young's Point. In this he was perhaps not singular. It was unusual with our generals to have an elaborately wrought plan of operations. In fact it was the elaborate plans which uniformly failed. For many weary weeks after the base of the army had been firmly established, Grant was busy trying scheme after scheme which might enable him to locate himself on the bluffs to the north of the town. These are the keys to Vicksburg. Indications are by no means wanting that he himself began to regret that he had not adopted the overland route. His position was a trying one. The fickle public was all but ready to tire of him also, as it had on lesser pretexts of so many of his brother soldiers; for a year he had been floundering about, with no substantial success to show. Something was demanded of him, if he would not forfeit the people's confidence.

Grant was called on to look the matter squarely in the face. Assault promised ill success from any point, while involving the certainty of heavy losses. To go back and try the really most feasible route seemed like failure acknowledged, and would therefore be politically ruinous, though strategically sound. To turn Pemberton's left was a desperate undertaking. Its only merit lay in that it showed no sign of turning back. Supplies must come by a most circuitous route, liable to fatal interruption, and the fleet must run the Vicksburg batteries. Choice was difficult; but, with his usual disregard of obstacles, Grant adopted the latter plan. He could face a difficult problem rather than a simple one. His courage grew with opposition. He never feared to assume any risk. In this case success proved it a virtue. Not so a year later in Virginia. This type of courage often lacks the tempering

element of intelligent caution. Having launched his army on its perilous mission, the work was done with vigor, and it succeeded. But Grant's success, like not a few of Napoleon's, was now aided by his opponent's incapacity. Had Lee and Jackson been in his front, his triumph would have been hardly earned. Johnston had 31,000 men "for duty." Pemberton began the campaign with some 50,000. Imagine the two great Virginia soldiers, one within a well-fortified city in Grant's front, the other in the open, on his rear. Would the loss of 8,000 men have measured the fighting during a campaign and siege of two months? Was that the measure of Grant's thirty days' march from the Rappahannock to the Chickahominy? Would 40,000 men have been cooped up by an opposing force not much greater? Would such an army have surrendered without grievous bloodshed? The 1864 campaign in Virginia answers these queries all too plainly. It cannot be denied that Johnston was a good soldier; but, with all his ability, he was never distinguished as a fighter. His tendency was dilatory; he was never quite ready to attack. With a force all but equal to Grant's, he made no attempt to cut the knot of the difficulty. To be sure he felt no great reliance on Pemberton; but he owed more assistance to the troops in Vicksburg than he rendered. He had it within his power to nullify Grant's campaign.

Still Vicksburg fell and Grant won the great success of the war. Though equal forces at this moment in the East were suffering thrice his loss, it was only to repel invasion. There were no such trophies, no such wholesale captures. By whatever means, Grant's was the apparent triumph; and he received his well-earned laurels in the plaudits of the people.

Grant's field was now enlarged to take in the Chattanooga operations. Rosecrans had obtained a foothold in that city; but the enemy held us in a *quasi* state of siege, and it was necessary to drive him from our front. Grant's restless activity would not allow him to sit down and wait. After

some initial operations already devised by Rosecrans, by which the city was revictualled, he undertook a descent upon Bragg in force (November, 1863). His plans for the battle of Chattanooga were to hold Bragg with demonstrations on his left at Lookout Mountain, and in the centre across Chattanooga Valley; while Sherman, with abundant force, should assail his right at the north end of Mission Ridge. The design was good; and it was natural that Grant should entrust Sherman with the main task. He knew him well and felt him equal to the work cut out; but matters fell out differently from what Grant expected. Sherman was held in check at Tunnel Hill, partly by natural obstacles, while Hooker actually turned Bragg's left at Lookout Mountain; and Thomas's men, all but in contravention of orders, captured Mission Ridge in the centre, and at once relieved the pressure on Sherman. The losses show what part of the army did the fighting: Sherman's loss was 1500; Thomas's, 4000; Hooker's was the least heavy.

In this battle of Chattanooga, then, it was to a certain extent in the wake of accident that there came success. Grant's plan had worked to a given point, and then failed, because Sherman could make no further headway. Thomas's attack was intended to be a mere demonstration, to draw away, if might be, some of the enemy's forces from Sherman's front. Instead of such limited work, however, the Army of the Cumberland broke Bragg's centre, and it was this which won the battle. It is certain that, had these gallant men not reached their goal, some one would have been severely held to blame for their thus exceeding their appointed task. There is nothing in this battle which shows any remarkable trait in Grant. He deserves and will always have the credit of pushing his work with speed and vigor; and no doubt he would have accomplished his end even if the Army of the Cumberland had not so brilliantly captured Mission Ridge. We are, however, not seeking evidence of ordinary but of

extraordinary skill. His opponent here was by no means a noteworthy soldier. Braxton Bragg, though possessing some excellent qualities, was always defeated, and that by our own unsuccessful generals; his opposition to Grant's attack at Chattanooga was not obstinate. The total loss was small compared with the outcome of the battle.

Up to this point, in fact, except at Shiloh, Grant had accomplished the most substantial results with the most moderate losses; the public did not gauge the meagre quality of the opposition; they saw only what had been gained, and valued the man accordingly. At Belmont, Grant had lost 600 men; at Shiloh, his one great battle hitherto, 12,000; at Iuka, 1000; at Corinth, 2500; in the long Vicksburg campaign, 8000; at Chattanooga, some 6000. Except at Shiloh, then, measuring the bitterness of the fighting by the loss, Grant had never yet been hard put to it. Compared with the Army of the Potomac, with its 3000 *hors de combat* at Bull Run; 2200 at Williamsburg; nearly 6000 at Fair Oaks; 16,000 in the Seven Days'; 15,000 in Pope's campaign; 12,500 at Antietam; 13,000 at Fredericksburg; 17,000 at Chancellorsville; 23,000 at Gettysburg,—these losses give small chance indeed to underrate the East! Even Badeau acknowledges that the Army of Northern Virginia was the best led and strongest army in the Confederacy; steadier under defeat as well as in success, than any other.

It is passing strange, then, that Grant, as at this time he undoubtedly did, should have believed that the Army of the Potomac had never been fought *au fond*; that he should have imagined that Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia could be beaten by the same methods as Pemberton and Bragg. But such was the fact, and Grant, on his taking up the work of the Eastern strategic field (March, 1864), set himself the task to make the rugged old army do that which he thought it never yet had done. Grant at this time openly gave his preference to hard blows over manœuvring. "Continuous

hammering" was inscribed upon his shield. His belief seems to have been that the use of skilful tactics is a symptom of pusillanimity. Other and greater soldiers have sometimes for a while been subject to this delusion; but they have never needed such fearful lessons to teach them their mistake. Grant was to discover his error in his first clash of arms, and to recognize the fact that he had never yet faced a captain such as was the man who through so many campaigns had borne the proud banner of the South on the Old Dominion soil; that he had never led stouter hearts against more valiant foes.

Grant's first tussle with Lee, in the Wilderness, should have opened his eyes to the falsity of his theory. His loss of 15,000 men without gain of any kind to any other mind would have been appalling; but though "Grant acknowledged that the fighting was the hardest he had ever known, for Shiloh was not comparable with the Wilderness," he, says his biographer, "was not discouraged after this battle." That indeed proved that he was stanch. But had he learned a lesson? That would have shown him to be discreet. According to Badeau, Lee was not an able soldier. This writer speaks of Lee's "feebleness in offensive action" in the Wilderness attack, and states it as his opinion that while "bold in conception, even in attempt, . . . in execution he was weak."<sup>1</sup> Assuming this to be just, where does it place Grant, who then led all but two to one of Lee's effective, and of material quite as gallant? Badeau recognizes this natural conclusion, but he endeavors to rid himself of its effect by heaping blame on Grant's lieutenants, from Meade down, for every failure of the Army of the Potomac, despite fighting such as Grant had never yet conceived. Even Hancock "could inspire, but apparently not control his soldiers. In the Wilderness, all the splendid results of his success on the 6th of May, were lost by this same

<sup>1</sup> 2 Badeau, 129-130.

incapacity.”<sup>1</sup> Apart from what we know of the Army of the Potomac generals, will this line of argument ever prove Grant worthy to sit with Cæsar, Napoleon and Frederick? Having found that Lee could check any direct advance upon his lines, Grant concluded to resort to what might have saved him much, a short three days before. He moved by the flank on Spottsylvania; Lee anticipated him by one of those lucky accidents common to war, Anderson happening to march at night instead of waiting for daybreak.

In a paper of which Grant is the subject, we cannot refrain from constantly quoting Badeau. This eulogist naturally puts things (in however mistaken a manner) in such light as if possible to work in Grant's favor, and it is a fair inference that Badeau's points are more or less inspired by Grant himself; though we may surely absolve Grant from any share in Badeau's adulation. With reference to this check, Badeau claims that Lee ordered Anderson to Spottsylvania under a mistaken conception of Grant's intentions. “Yet these very mistakes were destined to thwart the well-laid scheme of the national general.”<sup>2</sup> . . . “Lee, however, could claim no credit for having out-generalled his rival. He had utterly misapprehended Grant's design. . . . But if fortune was thus thrust upon Lee by his lieutenants, it was just the other way with Grant. He had been baffled by the same accidents that had assisted his adversary, and by circumstances which his own generals should have rendered impossible.”<sup>3</sup> And straight-way all the blame is held to fall from the shoulders of the captain to those of his lieutenants. How indeed is Badeau to make Grant a great soldier by so belittling his opponent? But Lee had indeed “stumbled into a good position.”<sup>4</sup> Had Grant so done, in what glowing terms would Badeau have characterized the achievement.

Up to this moment Grant's hard blows had only punished

<sup>1</sup> 2 Badeau, 183.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, 145.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, 140.

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.*, 146.

the Army of the Potomac. Lee, as he found to his sorrow, was of other stuff than his quondam adversaries; Grant had met his match in all but material resources. Among Grant's qualities was wonderful staying power. Up to a certain point this is one of the highest virtues of a soldier, but it can be pushed too far. Grant was altogether too blind to the advantages of combining manœuvring with direct assault. He could not believe that Lee had even greater endurance than himself; that the Army of Northern Virginia could much longer resist his massed blows. He had yet to learn how tough was the grain of that wonderful body of men. The result of this mistaken estimate followed in the attack on the Salient in Lee's centre, with another still more grievous check as a result. An assailant labors under the disadvantage of attacking intrenchments. To offset this he is able secretly to mass his men and attack a single point, while his enemy must keep all portions of his line equally manned until he divines where the blow is to fall. To attack without studying your opponent's position is to throw away this manifest advantage, to refuse to add skill to mere strength of arm. The attacks at this point appear all to have been given like blows in the dark. The lamentable work at Spottsylvania Badeau sums up as follows: "Every manœuvre had a meaning, every assault was timed. There was no blind butting at the enemy, but a constant endeavor to discover his weak points, and to strike him between the joints."<sup>1</sup> Upon Meade is placed the blame of not following up successful attacks.

Grant might readily have flanked the enemy out of his position; but he could not give up the contest. His inflexible nature would not allow him to yield to Lee. He knew Lee to be vastly his inferior in men, and was unable to believe that he could not be crushed by weight alone. For a week succeeding he made partial attacks at all points,

<sup>1</sup> 2 Badeau, 168.

shifting divisions from place to place along the line, seeking a weak point in the harness of the Army of Northern Virginia through which to thrust his weapon. Lee met his every onset. No impression could be made.

In this short campaign of little over two weeks, Grant lost 37,500 men, nearly one in three of his "for duty" force. He accomplished nothing which manœuvring could not have compassed, unless he had weakened the *moral* of his antagonist more than his own. This he had not done; the Army of Northern Virginia was elated at its successful defence. The Army of the Potomac was disheartened at its losses with so little tangible result.

Courage is a common virtue in the soldier. That combination of physical and moral courage which enables a general to inflict, and unflinchingly to resist, heavy blows is the rarest and best; but this courage must be tempered with skill, to be of the greatest use, and skill implies a discreet use of power. Though it was Falstaff hiding behind his shield at the battle of Shrewsbury who exclaimed that the better part of valor is discretion, yet there is, for the commanding general of a great army, a far deeper meaning in these pregnant words.

Grant had failed to make any impression upon Lee. He must resort again to the manœuvring he contemns. While Grant was thus decimating the troops under his immediate eye, the minor armies were moving towards the common centre. As only Butler's force reached its goal, these minor forces need not be brought up, except to call attention to the system of divided attacks to which Grant still adhered. So far as Butler was concerned, Badeau leaves us to suppose that Grant had ordered him to capture Petersburg, as a first step in the advance on Richmond, with the James River as a base; but Grant's orders to Butler were very vague, and he could scarcely have supposed that Butler would look upon Petersburg as a *sine quâ non* in his problem, even if the



same orders to a more skilled soldier could be twisted into meaning so much. The same uncertainty as to what his eventual operations would be appeared here, as was seen in the Vicksburg campaign. If Grant really expected to use the James River route, he should definitely have ordered the capture of Petersburg. McClellan had pointed out its value. The map plainly showed it to be essential. It does not appear that Grant at this time paid much heed to the James River plan. He believed that he could demolish Lee on the northern route. Thus Butler's share in the programme failed of any good end. When he was finally "bottled up" at Bermuda Hundred, Grant re-enforced his own depleted ranks by the bulk of his command. The stalemate inflicted by Lee on Grant at the North Anna was so complete, that every one must recognize which was the abler tactician. But in withdrawing from a field where he lay with forces so divided, that, had not Lee been obliged to husband his men to the last degree, it might have gone hard with him, Grant showed clearly an ability to manœuvre, which it is a pity indeed he had not sooner used. There again was he forced to recognize that his antagonist could meet his most skilful movements as well as his stoutest blows; and again he moved by the left, but again to find the Army of Northern Virginia drawn up athwart his path at Cold Harbor.

Grant was impelled to try one more blow. His faith was still strong that he could break Lee's lines by sheer *vis inertiae*. This might still be possible if he would call to his aid the resources of grand tactics. He ought to have sought the key of his enemy's position, and to have massed his assault there; but, unlike the Army of the Potomac, he had not learned the wonderful vitality of Lee and his veterans. Orders were once more issued to attack along the whole line at 4.30 A. M. on June 2. The want of definite plan was painfully apparent. Skilful manœuvring might more than once have placed Lee where he would have to be the assault-

ing party, or forfeit his stake; but nothing of the kind is apparent. Grant, in his despatches, stated that Lee would not come out of his intrenchments to fight; but Grant had never tried the proper means to make him do so. In lieu of moving upon Lee's communications, and thus compelling him to leave his works for the open, Grant had constantly hurled his men against field-works which he should have learned, by the experience he had recently been through, that he could not take. Grant's method was just what Lee preferred. He was right in not coming out of his intrenchments to fight. Moreover, an "assault all along the line" was useless; to obtain advantages from the great loss of life which was inevitable, the dominating point of the line should have been developed, and the assault massed there. No reserves were apparently ready to follow up any advantages which might be gained. The extreme care in arranging details which should have been exercised was not to be seen. No picked troops were selected for the heaviest work. The orders were only for an "assault all along the line." The rank and file did not even know that Cold Harbor was to be a battle. The old method of selecting your point of attack, picking your troops and properly supporting them, is by no means obsolete. But Grant did not deem its use advisable. We all admire the splendid fighting of the Army of the Potomac at the Wilderness, at Spottsylvania, at Cold Harbor; but, like the Charge of the Light Brigade, "*c'est magnifique, — mais ce n'est pas la guerre!*"

The object of Grant's overland campaign had been to capture or destroy Lee's army. He had done neither; but he had lost 60,000 men in five weeks, without inflicting corresponding loss upon the enemy. The Second Corps alone had lost 400 men a day, from the time of leaving the Rappahannock. The full significance of this is apparent when the force of each army at the inception of the campaign is called to mind. Grant had numbered 122,000 men; Lee

had but 62,000. The fearful loss, equal to his adversary's entire force, was the result of assaults in mass, undertaken without the aid of that skill which a great soldier never neglects to employ. Whenever Grant resorted to manœuvring, he succeeded measurably. Whenever he attacked all along the line, he failed utterly.

The theory has been advanced that there had to be about so much hammering, about so much loss of life and consumption of energy and material, before we could hope to end the war; that, so long as the South had any men or means, the struggle would continue. There is a groundwork of truth in this proposition. The Confederacy was practically exhausted before it yielded; but the corollary is likewise true. If the South would certainly succumb when exhausted, it behooved us, on merely humanitarian grounds, to fight on conditions so nearly equal as to inflict the same loss upon the enemy as we ourselves must suffer. This had not been done; and the student of this final campaign in Virginia looks in vain for the master-stroke by which our forces, numbering two to one of the enemy, could compel the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia without losses to us greater in number than the total effective of that gallant body. Lee undoubtedly was fighting at a great advantage, on interior lines, in his own State, on the defence; but how was he overmatched in force!

Criticism cannot depreciate the really great qualities or eminent services of General Grant. His task was one to tax a Bonaparte. That he was unable to put an end to the struggle by means less costly in lives and material, if not indeed by some brilliant feat of arms, cannot detract from the praise actually his due for determined, unflinching courage. It rather adds to the laurels of Lee. It cannot be asserted that any other Northern general could have accomplished more against the genius of this soldier. It was Grant who, in the face of the gravest difficulties, political and military,

was able to hold the confidence of the nation and to prevent that party at the North which was clamoring for peace, from wrecking our success now all but won. But his truest admirers, indeed, he himself, admit Cold Harbor to have been a grievous mistake. And all who appreciate at its solid worth such ability as a soldier as Grant possessed, regret that in this great struggle with Lee he should have failed to employ the full resources which were his in abundance.

Again to turn for a moment to Badeau's slurs upon Lee. He "was vigilant, but not bold."<sup>1</sup> "Whenever he was obliged to assume the offensive, he failed." "No disparity of numbers can account for his timidity." A Fabian policy "was indeed the natural policy for a second-rate commander; but a man of genius or audacity should have massed his forces and hurled them on the divided enemy."<sup>2</sup> But "Lee was unable by some great stroke to divide and conquer his enemy."<sup>3</sup> If Lee was so lacking in ability, where must the average thinker class Grant? This is by no means a difficult problem for Badeau. He unhesitatingly meets it by assertive *dicta*, "the national leader," quotha! "lost no chance, saw every mistake made, and seized every opportunity."<sup>4</sup> "His nature indeed seemed like a sword, drawn only in the field or in emergencies. At ordinary times a scabbard concealed the sharpness and temper of the blade; but when this was thrown aside, amid the smoke and din of battle, the weapon flashed, and thrust, and smote — and won."<sup>5</sup> Let it not be supposed that these quotations are made in a spirit of irony or unfairness; they are of use in weighing the subject of this paper. If an advocate, so inspired as it is fair to presume Badeau to have been, must resort to such rodomontade as this, it may well be believed that no proper military defence of the 1864 campaign could be conjured up while the biography of General Grant was being penned.

Grant's transfer of the Army of the Potomac to the James was ably done, and in mid-June the forces were put over to

<sup>1</sup> *Badeau*, 219.    <sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, 220.    <sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, 221.    <sup>4</sup> *Ib.*, 319.    <sup>5</sup> *Ib.*, 21-22.

the south side. It is curious, however, that even at this time, when the new line of operations had been fully determined upon, Grant should still have given no positive orders for the capture of Petersburg. This city was an advanced fortress which protected the communications of Richmond with the interior; it was a strategic point of the greatest value. No operations on the James could be secure without its possession; but neither Hancock, who was first ordered forward in this direction, nor indeed Meade, appears to have known that Grant intended that Petersburg should at once be captured. Specific orders to this effect had certainly not been issued, and Grant's lieutenants had been taught to wait for such. Grant's habit was to keep his own counsel, and his subordinates learned his purpose only from his instructions for the work immediately in hand. Before the proper order came, Lee had thrown some old troops into the city; for nearly ten months (June, 1864, to March, 1865) Grant sat down before this place. There is a wearisome sameness to the operations during this period; they all tended to an extension of our left to secure such a foothold as would enable us to cut Lee off from his source of supply. There was no attempt to work on any other plan. It almost looks as if Grant, finally convinced that Lee was more than his match in the open, had deliberately concluded to bide his time until starvation should do the work, himself could not. This, his abundant resources and the confidence reposed in him, would enable him to do. The people had learned that some one man must be entrusted with supreme control, and Grant had the good fortune to keep alive the reliance of the nation on his vigor and skilful management.

Grant might perhaps have made more headway by leaving a sufficient part of his army in the trenches in front of Petersburg, and by moving with a heavy force far to the west upon Lee's communications; or, if it were determined to capture the place *à main forte*, by making a massed attack on

some point in the centre, after suitable mining operations had weakened Lee's defences and prepared for such an operation. But the only assault of this kind which was made was so lamentably managed that of necessity it failed. That, however, by no means proved that the plan itself was inoperative; but we search in vain for anything approaching a brilliant feat of arms. The end came finally by natural means. The Army of Northern Virginia died of inanition, in the last ditch, as it had threatened to do, a starved, haggard skeleton of its old proud self. It had lost all save honor.

It is difficult, then, to see upon what foundation to build the claim that, in the strict meaning of the term, Grant was a great soldier. He never won a battle when the fighting was desperate. At Shiloh Grant was defeated. It was Buell and he combined, aided by Beauregard's incapacity, which turned the tide on that field. In every struggle with Lee, until the end, when the Army of Northern Virginia was no longer itself, he was worsted. He never conducted a campaign to which one may point as a model for the student. His successes appear invariably to be due to extraneous conditions working to a happy result. He never met an opponent of recognized ability but he failed to accomplish the end he aimed at. Tried by the measure of the great captains, there is not on record a brilliant operation on a large scale of which Grant is the hero.

The one difficult fact to reconcile with this estimate of Grant is the ready obedience and support and admiration he compelled from all his lieutenants and fellow soldiers. How much of this was due to frank appreciation of Grant as a soldier, how much to his strong qualities of character, and above all how much to the instinctive habit of obedience of his subordinates, it is difficult to say. The fact remains to Grant's credit, that his generals all yielded him as honest service as they did generous approbation. That Grant showed himself to be a great man is easy of demonstration.

He possessed courage of the stanchest type. Defeat might be thrust upon him, but it never weighed him down. If he could not conquer, neither could he be conquered. He would have been unequalled in a defensive campaign. To lose a battle only made him more elastic in his determination to retrieve his loss; this quality alone, in the degree to which it was ingrained in Grant, stamps greatness upon any man who is occupied with national interests. We all know that the greatest of men may never happen to be placed where their powers can find adequate scope. Opportunity is the coefficient of genius; but to Grant, happily, was committed the management of the vastest of issues.

Grant was an honest, unselfish patriot. He won the nation's suffrages for the chief command by the fortune of having been where persistent energy could, with the aid of a fair share of military talent, accomplish large results. With rare good fortune he was removed, both by character and surroundings, from the besetting danger of political favoritism. What he was able to do, he was always given the chance to do. His command was never endangered by the clamor of political opponents. Had Grant's early duties cast his lot upon the Eastern field, he never exhibited that which leads one to believe that he would have been eminently successful. But his work was fortunately in the West, where great successes sometimes followed moderate effort; while in Virginia the heaviest of sacrifices rarely won more than ephemeral gain. And it is universally admitted to-day that the difficult military problem during our Civil War lay between the Appalachian and the Atlantic.

If we cannot claim for Ulysses S. Grant a place upon the roll of great commanders, we none the less owe him our grateful admiration for the great task which he actually did accomplish. It was his constancy under defeat, his calm weighing of the value of victory, his cool determination to do the work he had set himself to do, apart from all considera-

tions of self, and for duty's sake alone, which centred all Northern efforts to close our fratricidal struggle in a willingness to trust this man. Though he may not have shown the salient qualities of a Bonaparte, a Wellington, or a Von Moltke, he is none the less part of the history of this country, and he will justly go down to posterity as the man who, through good and ill fortune alike, unflinchingly bore the banners of the North, despite many a doubtful hour, to a final happy issue. He deservedly ranks as one of the greatest of Americans.



THE MILITARY CHARACTER AND SERVICES  
OF  
MAJOR-GENERAL  
WINFIELD SCOTT HANCOCK.

BY  
FRANCIS A. WALKER,  
BREVET BRIGADIER-GENERAL,  
U. S. V.

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*Read before the Society on Monday evening, February 13, 1838.*

The following is a list of the published writings by General Walker concerning the Civil War:—

GENERAL HANCOCK. Great Commanders Series. New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1894.

HANCOCK IN THE WAR OF THE REBELLION. A Paper read at a Meeting of the New York Commandery [of the Loyal Legion], February 4, 1891.

HISTORY OF THE SECOND ARMY CORPS IN THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC. . . . New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1886.

AN ORATION delivered . . . at the Soldiers' Monument Dedication in North Brookfield, January 19, 1870. Worcester: Goddard & Nye, printers. 1870.

ORATION before the City Government and Citizens of Boston, at a Meeting held at Tremont Temple, December 18, 1888. [In] A Memorial of Philip Henry Sheridan from the City of Boston. Boston: Printed by Order of the City Council, 1889.

ORATION [at the Twenty-first Annual Reunion of the Society of the Army of the Potomac, held at Portland, Maine, July 3d and 4th, 1890]. Report of Proceedings [pp. 18-32]. New York: Macgowan & Slipper. 1890.

MAJOR-GENERAL CHARLES DEVENS, Justice of the Supreme Court of Massachusetts. *Tam Marte quam Mercurio*. An Address delivered before the Commandery of the State of Massachusetts Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States, March 19, 1891. Boston: Press of Rockwell & Churchill. 1891.

## GENERAL HANCOCK.

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IN the early afternoon of the 3d of July, 1863, a brigade of Vermont troops, new to battle, lay under arms along Cemetery Ridge, watching the march of a Confederate column, which, panoplied in all the majesty and terror of war, was bearing down upon the centre of the Army of the Potomac. They had borne their share of the hideous cannonade, intended to shake the nerve of the Union forces, when 140 guns opened at a signal and for an hour and a half scourged the plain and the low crest on which our troops lay, until the very earth seemed to shake, and the air was full of bursting shells and their whistling fragments carrying death to every quarter. They had seen the Confederate column forming in the edge of the woods on Seminary Ridge; 50 hardy battalions wheeling into place, brigade after brigade breaking from cover to join the desperate enterprise, while the Confederate chieftains, with their staffs, galloped along the lines to give the last orders, then took their stations at the head of their troops. They had seen that column, 14,000 strong, launched by a word, its right directed against themselves, and had clutched their muskets tighter, with quivering hands and throbbing hearts, as their thoughts ran swiftly on to the encounter so soon to come, in this their first battle. They had seen Veazey's 16th regiment driven in from the skirmish line, as the stones and timbers of a broken dam are swept onward before the mountainous flood of waters. At half infantry range, they had opened fire on the brigade of Kemper, forming Pickett's right, a fire all the more deadly because the men who there wielded the musket had from boyhood been

accustomed to use the rifle along the wooded slopes or among the grassy vales of the Green Mountains. With mingled feelings of relief, for they were human, and of regret, for they were brave, they had seen the Confederates sheer abruptly off to the north, partly as the effect of the withering volleys poured among them by the men of Stannard and Gates, partly as the result of the original direction of the column of assault upon the "clump of trees" on Gibbon's line, partly in consequence of that instinctive tendency to close in upon the centre which besets all assaulting columns. While, then, in hope and doubt and fear, these brave Vermonters awaited the result of that terrible collision, seeing themselves apparently excluded, by the changed direction given to the Confederate column, from further participation in the great struggle, there rode between their lines a general officer of princely port and of a singularly bold and commanding aspect. It was Hancock, come to throw the Vermont brigade upon the flank of the Confederate column already pressing up the slope on which stood the troops of Gibbon and Alexander Hays. It was a place where no mounted man had for hours been seen. It was a place where no mounted man could for five minutes hope to live; and, even as Randall's Thirteenth Regiment, followed fast by the Sixteenth, flung itself forward, changing front on the right company, and opened upon the flank of the Confederate column, that stately figure suddenly drooped, the fire died out of that imperious eye, and the heroic leader of the left wing of the Army of the Potomac, there, on the front line of battle, fell stricken to the ground. Yet, even so, this prince of soldiers could not relinquish the charge entrusted to him. Raising himself upon his elbow, to look over the low, tumble-down stone wall by which he lay, he watched with filmy eyes the progress of the fight; in a feeble and faltering voice issued his orders to commanders and staff, and only when the mighty column which, forty minutes before, emerged from the woods on Seminary Ridge

had collapsed under the flank attack of Stannard and the advance of Webb, Harrow and Hall, suffered himself to be borne from the field.

That gallant soldier, that brilliant tactician, that born leader of men, has passed away from earth; and I know of no more fitting subject for the veterans of the war for the Union to contemplate to-day, than the military character and services of Winfield Scott Hancock. The outbreak of the war found Hancock, then in the thirty-eighth year of his age, a captain in the regular army, in charge of the quartermaster's depot at Los Angeles, on the Pacific coast. Christened with the name of America's greatest living soldier, graduated from the Military Academy in 1844, he had joined Scott's column in time to take part in the later battles of the marvellous campaign which ended in the capture of the Mexican capital. At Molino del Rey he was in the column of attack with Longstreet, Pickett and Armistead, — men whom he was to encounter, sixteen years later, in another and more memorable assault; and was brevetted for his gallantry at Contreras and Cherubusco. In the long interval which followed the conclusion of peace, Hancock saw much instructive service as aide-de-camp to General Clark upon the Great Plains, as quartermaster during the troubles with the Seminoles in Florida, in the border war in Kansas, in the Utah expedition of Harney, and upon the Pacific coast. Absolutely destitute of asceticism, always of hearty fellowship, fond of ease and given to good cheer, his stirring ambition, his intense interest in his profession, and his high standard of duty rendered these fourteen years one long term of military education. I doubt if there was an officer in the United States Army, who, during that period while political, social and industrial forces were preparing the war of secession, learned so much, or, to use the phrase of trade, "turned over his capital" so often. Hancock was not by nature a man of lofty intellectuality. He had courage, — fiery, enthusiastic courage; positive, active,

unflinching loyalty to country and to comrade ; he had industry beyond measure ; the ambition that stirs to do great deeds and be worthy of high promotion ; the power of patient labor, that has been called genius ; above all, an unrest while anything remained to be done, a dissatisfaction with what was incomplete, a repugnance at what was slovenly, coarse, or half-made-up. I am disposed to believe that this period of Hancock's life was passed to even better advantage than if it had comprised active operations on the large scale against a powerful enemy. The time was to come, all too soon, when lives were to be thrown away by thousands and money by millions ; when orders of infinite consequence were to be given as the result of one glance over a field as restless as the ocean after a storm ; when the conjectures of an officer on the picket-line were to govern the movements of twenty thousand men on the morrow. Meanwhile the future commander of the Second Army Corps, of the left wing at Gettysburg and in the Wilderness, was being trained for his high duties by conducting the orders and correspondence of a military department ; fitting out expeditions of a company or a squadron ; supplying outlying posts ; making long marches with a column that would scarcely have served, a few years later, for his headquarters escort ; and conducting the business of a quartermaster's depot on the plains or on the Pacific coast. To a man who is willing to do things just so well that they will pass without censure from his superiors, caring himself only for pay-day and poker, such a scale of operations is cramping and dwarfing. To a man who is trying to do everything at its best, who is studying his business and accumulating experience against the day of larger things, there is no practice more instructive, enlarging, and strengthening, if not pursued too long.

It followed that the outbreak of the war found Hancock singularly well endowed and equipped for the responsibilities and duties that were to devolve upon him. What he knew of

infantry and could do with infantry, let Williamsburg and Fredericksburg and Gettysburg and the Salient at Spottsylvania testify. While he was not master of the science of logistics like Meade and Humphreys, he could conduct a long march, over bad roads, with artillery and trains, better, in my humble judgment, than any other officer of the war, Federal or Confederate. In a somewhat protracted experience, I never but once knew the Second Corps, while under his command, no matter how extreme the distance or severe the conditions, by day or by night, arrive at its destination in bad form, straggled and broken; and its marches were often very long and trying, as on the 29th of July, 1862, when the corps made thirty-two miles, on a single road, with artillery and trains. In the supply of troops, Hancock, as the result of thorough training and downright hard work, and with the aid of one of the most capable quartermasters of the Volunteer service, Colonel Richard N. Batchelder,<sup>1</sup> achieved almost the highest possible success. A distinguished member of this Society, General and Judge Devens, has justly said that no army was ever so well fed and well clothed as the Army of the Potomac; and I venture to add that, of all the corps of that army not one was as well fed or clothed as the Second; nor do I fear that any old soldier here present will dissent from the opinion that regular rations, well shaped shoes, and warm blankets bear a very positive relation to good marching and hard fighting. Of the uses of cavalry and artillery Hancock knew enough, first, not to think, like many high commanding officers, that he knew everything, or to lead him to interfere in the conduct of those charged with these highly specialized services; and, secondly, to recognize good work whenever and by whomsoever done. It was but recently that that admirable cavalry officer, General David M. Gregg, of Pennsylvania, said to me that he had never known another

<sup>1</sup> Since the date of this paper, appointed Quartermaster-General of the United States Army.

infantry commander with whom he found it equally satisfactory to serve in the field.

Finally, Hancock's experience before the war had made him a perfect master of the Regulations, of the procedure proper to every department of the army and to every occasion of the service, and of the forms of military correspondence and record. A master, I say, not a slave; for while no man understood better the beneficial uses of red tape, no one knew better how to cut red tape when the occasion required. An essayist, Lord Macaulay, I think, in satirizing the adoption in the English language of certain Latin terms, asks us to imagine a Roman Consul, in his rank and pomp and warlike habiliments, seated in a back office in Bordeaux, a goose-quill over his ear, making out invoices for the skippers of merchant vessels. But the union of martial and civic functions need not be ludicrous. It would be hard to believe that Scipio at Zama looked one inch more the commander than Hancock at Fredericksburg or Gettysburg, or bore himself more knightly and heroically in danger and hardship, in weariness and wounds; yet Hancock was the greatest hand at "papers" the army ever knew. My head aches, now, from the long night vigils, when, after some weary march or fight, we pored for hours over reports and returns, and discussed minute points of the Regulations *appropos* of the correspondence appertaining to seventy or ninety regiments and batteries. It is usual to make flings at this sort of work and express contempt for "papers" and regulations and red tape; but it is more likely that a mill or factory or railroad will be well managed, whose accounts and correspondence are always in arrears, in confusion, in error, than that a brigade or division or corps will be well administered under the same conditions. The need of order and system is even greater in the latter than in the former case. This Hancock perfectly understood. He deemed it no less important a part of his duty to study the state of



his command through the morning reports and the monthly returns, than on the field of review ; and he knew that he could administer a tonic to a sickly regiment through the order book and the letter book not less effectually than at Sunday morning inspection.

Such, in his qualifications for service, was Hancock as, at his own request, he was ordered East, in the summer of 1861, that he might take an active part in the war which had broken out, amid such direful portents, on the Atlantic slope. For him there was not a moment of hesitation or of indifference as to the coming struggle. To the very centre of his being he was loyal to the Constitution and the laws ; and he never valued his commission in the army so highly as when it gave him a place in the front rank of their defenders. He knew too many of the men who, like his friend Armistead, had reluctantly and painfully broken the main ties of their lives in taking the other side, to indulge in cheap talk about traitors and sour-apple trees ; he knew too much of the Southern temper to make light of the task before the nation, or to predict a holiday parade for the Union armies ; but with all his soul he stood by the Union and the government, and never did his faith in the ultimate triumph of that cause waver, even amid disappointment, disaster, and disgrace.

On his first arrival in the East, he was assigned to duty with General Anderson, of Fort Sumter fame ; but he was himself so manifestly a commander, in every lineament, in every motion, that it was seen to be absurd to keep such a soldier on staff-duty, when an army of hundreds of thousands was to be officered ; and on the 23d of September, he was made Brigadier-General of Volunteers, and assigned to the Army of the Potomac. No commander ever more carefully prepared in camp for success in the field than Hancock did, here and through all his subsequent career. Doubtless, most who have any impression whatever regarding Hancock, personally, think of him as a kind of meteor on the battlefield ;

an object of admiration or of terror; flashing hither and thither; achieving his triumphs by sheer brilliancy of bearing, force of intuition, and mysterious power over men. In fact, it was with infinite labor that he forged the weapon his hand was to wield with such effect. He knew that the greater the force exerted, the more likely was the sword to break under the blow, unless it were perfectly wrought; and it was with care and pains inexpressible that he shaped and tempered it for the coming conflict. If at Williamsburg, in his first encounter with the enemy, he met and easily vanquished the Confederate column sent against him, led, on one wing, by D. H. Hill, and on the other, by Jubal Early, two of the ablest commanders of that army, it was not more by reason of the great tactical skill, calm courage, and majestic bearing which forever stamped upon him McClellan's epithet, *Superb*, than by reason of the long and careful training to which his troops had been subjected.

Of Hancock in the winter camps of 1861, two things especially require to be said: First, while he was a strict and even stern disciplinarian, he was wholly incapable of any of those silly brutalities which a few officers of the regular army who were set over volunteer regiments, and many volunteer officers who thought they were imitating regular army methods, indulged in during the first year of the war. Secondly, although a "regular" in every fibre of his being, Hancock was altogether destitute of that snobbishness regarding volunteers which was exhibited by so many small minds, in so many high places, during the first year of the Rebellion. He recognized the fact that the war was to be waged by volunteers. He saw that it was of supreme importance to promote the self-respect and self-confidence of volunteer regiments; to lead them to think that they could do anything, and were the equals of anybody; and that to be everlastingly talking about the regular army, as so many were, bewailing the lack of its methods and forms, instituting

odious comparisons, and sneering at the deficiencies of the new troops, was a very poor way of accomplishing that object.

Hancock not only did not sneer at volunteers, he did not even patronize them. He made them feel by his evident respect, his hearty greeting, his warm approval of everything they did well, that he regarded them as being just as fully, just as truly, just as honorably, soldiers of the United States Army, as if they belonged to the old Sixth Infantry. Such was the spirit in which Hancock met his new command. We know with what assiduity, patience and good feeling, what almost pathetic eagerness to learn and to imitate, the volunteers of 1861 sought to fit themselves for their part in the great struggle. Hancock's thorough and cordial acceptance of volunteers was seen, again, in his choice of staff officers throughout the war. Even after he had become a corps commander, he showed no disposition to take an officer of the regular army, as such. Mitchell and Bingham, Batchelder and Wilson, Brownson and Livermore, Miller and Parker, were good enough for him.

At the battle of Fair Oaks, Hancock's brigade, then in the Sixth Corps, was not called to take a part; but, while Porter was waging his bitter fight against odds, at Gaines's Mill, Hancock's brigade was engaged in holding back the enemy who sought to break in our lines near the Chickahominy. On the following day, while the Army of the Potomac was beginning the first march of that dreary retreat to the James, the enemy again threw themselves upon Hancock's lines, but were beaten off by the prompt and resolute action of his well-trained regiments. On both these occasions Hancock displayed that high degree of tactical skill which so strongly characterized his later work in command of a division, of a corps, and of a wing of the army. The eve of Antietam found Hancock easily the most conspicuous brigade leader in the Army of the Potomac; so that there was hardly a question who should succeed to the command of the

First Division of the Second Corps, when, at noon of that memorable day, tidings were borne to general headquarters that the gallant Richardson had fallen, never to mount horse or draw sword more. At once Hancock was sent for, in haste, from his brigade of the Sixth Corps, and despatched to take command of Sumner's old division, as it lay under arms, after its desperate battle around Piper's House.

It is always more or less of an experiment to promote even a capable and efficient brigadier to the command of a division. It may be that the natural range of his powers will be found to have been exceeded. Even should he, in time, grow up to the position, it is most likely that the new charge will be exercised at first with too much either of timidity or of rashness, with somewhat less than a full grasp of the situation, with comparative feebleness of authority and influence over the unfamiliar body. No such painful interval of self-distrust or of inadequacy to new and larger commands characterized Hancock's successive promotions. The very day he was advanced from Captain and Quartermaster to be Brigadier-General, he was, in every sense, a general officer, confident of his powers, rejoicing in the exercise of his functions, and fully master of his place, himself, his staff and his troops. An hour after Hancock rode down the line at Antietam, to take up the sword that had fallen from Richardson's dying hand, one could not have told, he himself hardly knew, that he had not commanded a division for a year. So thoroughly had he prepared himself for promotion during his service with a brigade, so sure was he of his powers, that he stepped forward to the higher command, upon the field of battle, amid its wreck and disorder, without a moment of hesitation or doubt; and at once became the leader of that division as fully and perfectly as Sumner had been, as Richardson had been. The staff knew it; the troops felt it; every officer in his place, and every man in the ranks, was aware before the sun went down that he belonged to Hancock's Division. In

the command of that division, composed of fine material, admirably moulded by the heroic Summer in the winter camps of 1861-62, and gifted with an extraordinary wealth of brilliant young soldiers destined to great careers, like Barlow, Zook, Brooke, Nugent, Patrick Kelly, Miles and McKeen, Hancock remained until the 10th of June, 1863.

Time will not serve to tell the story of Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville. Of Fredericksburg, where, on the 13th of December, 1862, Hancock led the brigades of Meagher, Caldwell and Zook out of the city, through streets commanded by the enemy's guns; crossed bridges by the flank, at half artillery range; and there deploying his forces, moved forward over a plain swept from end to end by direct and enfilading fires, up towards Marye's Heights, against two tiers of musketry, to within pistol shot of the Stone Wall which was held by four ranks of veteran riflemen, only desisting from the hopeless attempt to which he had been assigned when his gallant division had lost 2013 men, including 156 commissioned officers killed or wounded. Of Chancellorsville, where, on the 3d of May, 1863, when all others had left the neighborhood of the Chancellor House, Hancock held his division in two lines of battle, back to back, one fronting towards Gordonsville and the other towards Fredericksburg, his artillery firing down the lane between; and so kept the enemy at bay until the roads leading to the rear had been cleared and the way was open for his own slow and orderly retreat.

Each succeeding battle had but heightened Hancock's reputation for exact obedience to orders, for almost magical influence over men, for great tactical skill, for unflinching resolution, whether in attack or defence; while his administrative ability, and the strict discipline of his command, in camp or on the march, had clearly pointed him out as the rising soldier of the Potomac Army, so that, when, on the eve of Lee's invasion of Pennsylvania, that excellent officer, Major-General Couch, relinquished command of the Second Corps, on

his assignment to the Department of the Susquehanna, every eye instinctively turned to Hancock as his successor. It was with a stern joy at the fulfilment of his righteous ambition ; with a glad confidence in his own powers ; yet, not the less, with an earnest sense of the responsibility thus devolved upon him, that, on the 10th of June, Hancock first drew his sword at the head of the corps which, in losing 15,000 men in battle, had never lost a color or a gun ; whose fair fame, he was well resolved, should never suffer wrong at his hands. Already had his reputation so far outrun even this high promotion, that, within three weeks of the day when he ceased to be the commander of a division, General Meade sent him forward to Gettysburg, to stay the disaster of the opening battle ; to take command of the three corps at the front, over two officers his superiors in rank ; and to report upon the suitability of the position for the concentration of the entire army.

In every great career, whether civil or military, there is one day which is peculiarly memorable ; which, by reason, in part, perhaps, of favorable opportunities or especially conspicuous position, in part, also, through some rare inspiration, quickening the genius of the statesman or the warrior, becomes and remains to the end the crown of that career ; the day which the mention of that leader's name instinctively suggests ; the day to which, in disappointment or in retirement, his own thoughts go back as the, to him, day of days. Such to Hancock was Gettysburg. From the time when, by his splendid resolution, force of character, and power over men, he checked the rout of the first afternoon, restored order and confidence, and formed the new lines which were to be held unbroken to the end, down to the hour when the divisions of Gibbon and Hays, leaping the stone walls and rail fences which had partially sheltered them during the cannonade and the great charge, gathered in 30 Confederate colors and 4000 prisoners from the shattered divisions of Pettigrew and Pickett, Gettysburg was to Hancock all glo-

rious and fortunate. Even the desperate wound he received in the moment of victory scarcely cast a shadow upon the great triumph he had achieved during the first month of his career as the commander of an army corps.

That the campaign of 1864 did not bring a proportional increase of fame was due chiefly to three causes. First, he had already reached an almost dangerous elevation in popular reputation, from which one was far more likely to fall than to rise. Secondly, Hancock's Gettysburg wound continued, almost from the opening of the campaign, in May, till his enforced departure from the field, in November, to be a source of weakness, suffering, and, at times, of total disability, requiring him frequently to seek rest in an ambulance or on the ground when, according to his habits as a commander, he would have been galloping over the field or leading the march of his foremost division. Thirdly, the species of warfare that was initiated in May, 1864, against an enemy acting almost wholly on the defensive, behind breastworks protected by slashing and abatis, and largely, also, by swamps; in a region where clear ground was highly exceptional, and where the uncleared ground was often covered by dense and stubborn growths of trees and underbrush, through which a single woodman could with difficulty force his way, was one that offered few opportunities for brilliant actions. Indeed, the campaign of 1864 was one which, except in the case of a few dashing young brigade commanders, was to destroy reputations, and not to make them. Sheridan, indeed, won great fame during the year, but it was by his operations in the fertile and open Valley of Virginia, rather than in the jungles of the Wilderness or of Spottsylvania, or among the swamps of the Totopotomoy or the Chickahominy. To Hancock the loss of opportunity, through the peculiar character of the campaign, was greater than to any other commander, since those qualities in which he pre-eminently excelled, namely, tactical skill and personal influence over his

soldiers in critical moments, were, on most of the battlefields of 1864, largely neutralized by the nature of the country.

Yet, though that campaign afforded little opportunity for brilliant strokes and grand successes, the fame of Hancock suffered no diminution under its fearful trials. He it was who, bringing his troops up to the support of Getty's fine division, on the Orange and Fredericksburg Plank Road, in the afternoon of the 5th of May, forced back the corps of Hill, which had advanced to seize the Brock Road Junction, and thus intervene between the two wings of the Union Army. He it was who, in the early morning of the 6th, encountering with his own divisions and those of Getty and Wadsworth, the corps of Hill and Longstreet, fought that great Battle on the Left, in the Wilderness, which has become a synonym for savage ferocity and unrelenting determination. If the charge at Cold Harbor failed to secure its object, the high-heaped mounds of patriot dead remain a monument of unsurpassed valor and discipline. And it was Hancock's closely massed divisions, moving under his eye, which broke into that wild, spontaneous cheer, as the red earth of the Salient came into view, on the early morning of the 12th of May; dashed forward against a storm of lead, and leaped the Confederate intrenchments, capturing 4000 prisoners, 20 cannon and 30 standards.

Some of you remember, for you were there, how from that bloody dawn till twelve o'clock at night, the Second Corps, with the good Sixth fighting on its right, held those captured intrenchments against the utmost efforts of Lee's veteran brigades roused almost to madness by the losses of the early morning; how trees were cut down by the fire of musketry alone; how the foemen fired their pieces full in each other's faces, or gave bayonet thrusts across the intrenchments on which at times the hostile flags were both planted; how, again and again, the trenches had to be cleared of the slain, that the living might have a place to stand. Over that desperate and



protracted contact, Hancock presided, stern, strong, and masterful; withdrawing the shattered brigades as their ammunition became exhausted, supplying their places with fresh troops; feeding the fires of battle all that long day and far into the night, until the Confederates, at last abandoning their attempts to retake the captured works, retired from the field, full twenty hours after the order "forward" had been given to the column of assault.

In the brilliant strategic movement upon Petersburg, and in the bloody assaults which followed the miscarriage of the attempt to seize the Cockade City before the arrival of Lee's army, Hancock took a part which was abruptly terminated by an outbreak of his Gettysburg wound. Recovering from his disability, he conducted in July and August two expeditions to the north bank of the James River, of which time will allow me to speak only so far as to relate an incident strikingly characteristic of Hancock and of the gallant commander of the Union cavalry, who was, at this time, serving under Hancock's orders.

The July expedition to Deep Bottom, as it is called, had in view two possible results. First, that the enemy's lines on that side of the river might be found so thinly held as to allow our powerful corps of cavalry, after the Confederate infantry should have been pushed back upon Chapin's Farm, to capture Richmond by a rush, or, at least, cut up the railroads on the north of the city. Secondly, that, failing in this, the movement might serve as a feint to draw a large part of Lee's army away from Petersburg, which the Fifth, Ninth and Eighteenth Corps were preparing to enter through the ghastly avenue that was to be laid open by the explosion of Burnside's mine. The first object was defeated by the rapid concentration of the enemy's forces; but, as a demonstration in favor of Burnside, the expedition was an overwhelming success. So alarmed were the Confederates that they drew over to that side the larger part of their entire army. This,

while favoring the projected assault upon Petersburg, was, of course, accompanied by no inconsiderable danger to the column on the north bank of the river. Critical as was the position on the 28th, it was rendered highly perilous when the Lieutenant-General, on the evening of that day, ordered Mott, with nearly one half the corps, back to Petersburg. This was to leave two small divisions, scarcely 8000 strong, to confront overwhelming odds throughout the succeeding day. It was, however, provided that the cavalry should cross to the south bank, leave the horses there, in the charge of every fourth cavalryman, and, returning, help the infantry hold their extended lines. In such a situation everything depended on the enemy's obtaining not even a suggestion of the weakness of our remaining column. To this end the most precise instructions were issued regarding the crossing; not a man was to enter upon the bridge after the first break of day. Every subordinate commander was required to acknowledge receipt of these instructions; and then headquarters, worn out by the excessive exertions of the three preceding days, sank to rest. From the sound sleep into which I had fallen, I was awakened by hearing my name called from the General's tent. Running in, I found Hancock tossing on his camp bed. "Colonel," he said, "I am anxious about the cavalry. Go to Sheridan and say to him that he must see to it that not a man goes upon the bridge after it is light." I jumped upon an orderly's horse which was kept saddled for an emergency, and galloped to Sheridan's headquarters. As I approached, the first voice that challenged me was, not the sentinel's, not a staff officer's, but the voice of the great cavalryman himself. "Who's that?" I gave my message. "I was thinking of the same thing," was the reply. "Forsyth, go down to the bridge, and if General Kautz has not crossed, tell him to mass his division behind the woods." Forsyth and myself rode together towards the bridge. A division of cavalry was just entering upon it. Fifteen

minutes more, and the Confederates, who had all night listened to the low rumbling sounds and the dull jarring of the bridge, and from their lookouts had been straining their eyes to catch the direction of the movement, would have seen our troops passing to the rear, and in all probability would have swooped down upon our little force, and driven us into the river. As it turned out, when it became light enough for them to see, what they beheld was our dismounted cavalrymen returning from the south side, with their carbines over their shoulders, looking for all the world like honest infantry, seemingly the end of a column which had been crossing all night. The effect was complete. The Confederate leaders did not doubt that every brigade which could be taken from the Petersburg lines had been sent in haste across the James, to force a passage into Richmond. This illusion, aided by the activity and audacity of our skirmish line, under Miles, not only sufficed to save us from an attack which could hardly have failed to result in our destruction, but held the Confederate forces closely in place twenty miles from Petersburg where the assault of the 30th of July was impending.

My story carries its own moral. Here were the two men of the Potomac Army regarding whom it was popularly supposed that they won their successes by daring and brilliant strokes. Yet we see them lying awake at night, after incredible fatigues, to ponder the chances of a possible miscarriage. In how many critical moments of the war did the disappointment of well laid plans, if not disastrous defeat, result because able and skilful officers deemed their duty discharged when they had given the appropriate orders! This was not Hancock's or Sheridan's idea of a commander's work. They believed in giving the right orders and then seeing them executed; and it was to this, fully as much as to their more splendid qualities of soldiership, that the success of these two chieftains was due.

Time will not serve to tell the story of that blackest of

days in the calendar of the gallant leader of the Second Corps, when on the 25th of August, after his command had lost 20,000 men in battle since it crossed the Rapidan, two of his decimated divisions, scarce 6600 strong, caught in the ill-constructed intrenchments at Reams' Station, were driven from a portion of their works by repeated assaults from superior force, with the loss of 7 standards, 9 cannon, and 1700 prisoners. The agony of that day never passed away from the proud soldier, who, for the first time, in spite of superhuman exertions and reckless exposure on his part, saw his lines broken and his guns taken. "Were I dead," said Nelson, "want of frigates would be found written on my heart." So one who was gifted to discern the real forces which in us make for life or for death, looking down upon the cold and pallid form of Hancock as he lay at rest beneath the drooping flag of his country, there on Governor's Island in February of 1886, would have seen "Reams' Station" written on brow, and brain, and heart, as palpable as to the common eye were the scars of Gettysburg.

Nor can I tell of the honorable expedition to the Boydton Road, in October, 1864, which closed the career of Hancock in the field. During November, his wounds still distressing him, it was proposed by the President and the Secretary of War that he should relinquish his command, and, returning to the North, during the season when active operations would be impracticable through stress of weather, should raise a corps to be composed wholly of veterans who had served honorably through one term of enlistment. This trust Hancock accepted in the same spirit with which he had received and, so far as lay in him, had executed every commission and order since he left the quartermaster's camp at Los Angeles. In the opening of the year he took the field at the head of his new command, officered by well approved soldiers like Carroll, Brooke and Morgan; but before he was called to encounter the enemy, the brilliant combinations of Sheridan,

Warren and Humphreys, the sturdy valor and indomitable energy of Wright and Ord, the fine soldiership and loyal devotion of Parke and Gibbon, had brought the long contest to a close; Petersburg had fallen, and with it Richmond, the object of four years' incessant fighting; Lee's army, attempting to escape, had been beset in flank and rear by troops that seemed for the time to have lost the sense alike of fatigue and of fear; battles had been fought upon the double-quick; divisions and army corps had marched, or run, in deployed lines from daylight until dark; and, at last, at Appomattox Court House, the Army of Northern Virginia, after performing prodigies of valor, surrounded and brought to bay before five-fold odds, surrendered without shame, and the greatest rebellion of modern times was crushed.

I wish I could tell the hundred anecdotes that come up to my mind, illustrative of the character of the soldier and the man, Winfield Scott Hancock; what pains he took to encourage young officers, so that the juniors of his old division and of his corps fairly worshipped him, formed themselves on him, and were ready to die at his word; how just and honorable in dealing with the reputations of others, so that I have known him keep a staff officer riding half a day among the camps of the army, to find out the name of a lieutenant who, in the heat of some action, had brought him a message from another commander, that due acknowledgment might be made of it in his official report; how courteous and considerate to the unfortunate, so that, when it was my fate to fall into the hands of the Confederates, Lieutenant-General A. P. Hill sent a staff officer with the message that he had given orders that I should be treated with the utmost attention, because General Hancock had been so kind to his [Hill's] soldiers when prisoners; but it is time to bring this long paper to a close.



MAJOR-GENERAL  
ANDREW ATKINSON HUMPHREYS.

BY

JAMES H. WILSON,

BREVET MAJOR-GENERAL, U. S. A. ; MAJOR-GENERAL, U. S. V.

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*Read before the Society on Tuesday evening, March 7, 1893.*

The following is a list of the published writings by General Wilson, concerning the Civil War: —

THE LIFE OF ULYSSES S. GRANT, General of the Armies of the United States. By Charles A. Dana, . . . ; and J. H. Wilson. . . . Published by Gurdon, Bill & Company, Springfield, Mass., 1868.

THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF EMORY UPTON, Brevet Major-General U. S. Army. By Peter S. Michie. With an Introduction by James Harrison Wilson. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1885.

GENERAL SHERMAN AND HIS MEMOIRS, *International Review*. Vol. 2, 1875, pages 779-817.

LIFE AND SERVICES OF BREVET BRIGADIER-GENERAL ANDREW JONATHAN ALEXANDER, United States Army. A sketch from personal recollections, family letters and the Records of the Great Rebellion. New York, 1877.

REVIEWS AND PAPERS on Lincoln as Commander-in-Chief, Ulysses S. Grant, General Thomas, General McClellan, General Sheridan, General W. F. Smith, General Kilpatrick, General J. E. Johnston, General Ames; the Battle of Shiloh, the Battle of Chickamauga, The March to the Sea; Franklin and Nashville, published in the *New York Sun*. The pursuit and Capture of Jefferson Davis, published in the *Philadelphia Times*.

See List of Papers read before the Military Historical Society of Massachusetts at the end of this volume.



## GENERAL HUMPHREYS.

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THE great men of history are those who are potentially connected with great events, those who are in supreme control when great deeds are performed. It matters little whether their personal qualities are transcendent or not if only they are at the head when striking and far-reaching changes are made in the affairs of a great nation. The roads by which men travel matter but little if only the aim be high and the end fortunate. And yet no matter how high the aim nor how great the faculties if they be not used on affairs of the first importance. Great virtues cannot make great men except in great emergencies. A man's success in life is compounded of his own gifts, his own opportunities, and the way in which he brings the one to bear upon the other. No man, simply as a man, stands for more than unity in the history of the race of which he is a member. As the affairs of races and nations are greater than those of individuals, so in the life equation of any man, be he soldier or statesman, the greater factors and forces are those which concern the race or the nation, and lie outside, above and beyond him. If nature has brought him forth at the right time and placed him in the right station, where great interests are at stake and great events are happening, he may have great opportunities. With great perspicacity and great resolution he may seize upon them, and then with great energy of body and mind and the greater forces of his time working with him, and not against him, he may play a controlling part and pass into history as a great man. Just what qualities of

body or mind are necessary to this result, no one can say precisely. They may differ as much as times and opportunities differ. In the Homeric age, fortitude was looked upon as the greatest of human virtues, the one which, displaying itself in divine transports and heroic frenzies, could alone secure the favor of the gods. But at the same time, superstitions and omens were the daily guides of even the most elevated minds. Only the loftiest heroes rose superior to them. "You bid me," said Hector to Polydamus, "be guided by the flight of birds. But I heed them not whether they pass by the right hand towards morning and the sun, or by the left hand towards the vapor and the darkness. The only best omen is the defence of our country."

The surroundings of men change with the lapse of ages. Superstition yields to science and barbarism to civilization; but human ideals and aspirations remain substantially the same. The love of family, of country, of power and of leadership; the hope of wealth and glory; the feelings of ambition and patriotism, and, above all, the sense of duty, are still the master motives of man's nature. Life is more complex, and the interests of human society are now more extended and more far-reaching than they have ever been before; but the virtues remain unchanged and unchanging. We Americans are accustomed to regard the period of the Revolution as the heroic age of the Republic, and to look upon the men of that time as the demi-gods of our race; but when the events of a later day, and the deeds of those who then guided the Republic through its civil and military perils, are considered, may we not fairly claim that the heroic age is yet with us, and that our race is still the bountiful producer of heroes?

No one who knew the principal leaders of our day, as we knew them, can doubt it. No one who comes after us and reads the story of their virtues, of their fidelity, fortitude and persistency, of their honor, honesty and unselfishness, of

their patient toil, their lofty aspirations, their chivalrous modesty, and, above all, their sublime conception of duty to themselves and to the cause of national unity, can for a moment hesitate to assign them a high place among the heroes of our race. They had their peculiarities, their idiosyncrasies, their limitations, but it may well be doubted if any period of the world's history can show a larger number of patriots and heroes, a wider dissemination of the public virtues, higher ideals of public duty, or more numerous instances of pure, upright and courageous manhood than the period of the Great Rebellion!

It was the good fortune of the older members of this Society to know many, if not most, of the leading men on both sides of the great struggle, and I venture to express the hope that they will tell us, while yet they may, of the personalities and private lives of those illustrious men. So far, the reports, narratives and histories give us merely the driest official details of military movements and events. Nothing, or but next to nothing, is said of the individuals, their education, appearance, motives, peculiarities and character; a little more is told of the quality of their deeds, and yet not enough to give us a true idea of the events in which they were concerned. Those great men — some of them were really great, and more deserved to be — while well enough known to us, who were their companions, are almost unknown except by name to the public, and will be entirely unknown to the next generation unless something effective is done to rescue them from oblivion. A few chosen names will be written large on the page of general history, but the personalities belonging even to them will in spite of their virtues and great performances disappear forever!

One of the most interesting and meritorious characters of this period was Major-General Andrew Atkinson Humphreys, the last commander of the invincible Second Corps. He was a gentleman, a scientist and a soldier of the highest quality.

Our race has produced no loftier specimen of manhood; modern education no finer example of the scientific soldier. And this is as it should be, for in Humphreys it had the best of materials to work upon. Descended from a Welsh family, four generations of whom had lived in and near Philadelphia, and two generations had been shipbuilders and naval constructors of the highest rank, he came by his qualities naturally. Daniel Humphreys, the great-great-grandfather, was a Welsh Quaker of substance and consideration, who came to Pennsylvania and became the owner of a large tract of land at Haverford in 1682. His grandson Joshua was a ship-carpenter, and in the practice of his trade soon became widely known as the leading shipbuilder of his day. He was the first naval constructor and adviser of the United States, appointed by General Washington, and while in office laid the foundation of the supremacy of our wooden naval vessels, by conceiving and carrying out the idea that they should be larger and stronger and carry heavier guns, and more of them, than the current methods of rating would indicate. He designed the *Constitution*, lovingly remembered in our annals as "Old Ironsides," the *Chesapeake*, the *Congress*, the *President* and the *United States*, and built the last-named ship in his own yard. It is a sufficient tribute to his genius to say, that these vessels were the most celebrated frigates ever turned out of any shipyard in the world, up to that time and for many years afterwards.

Joshua's brother Charles early entered political life, was a member of the Provincial Assembly and of the Continental Congress; but, like John Dickinson and several other worthy men, he voted against the Declaration of Independence. Joshua's son Clement was a sea-faring man who died young. Another son, Samuel, born in Philadelphia in 1778, was bred to his father's business, and was employed before he was yet of age in buying live oak for the Navy. In 1815 he was appointed Chief Constructor of the Navy, and held

that office till he died. He was a gentleman of the highest character and public spirit. Of course he adhered to the principle laid down by his father in naval construction, that, class for class, those ships which were of the largest tonnage and strongest construction and threw the greatest weight of metal from their broadsides would prove the most successful in battle. In 1824 the Emperor of Russia, through Mr. Ivanoff, his Consul-General at Philadelphia, invited Samuel Humphreys to enter his service, offering him a princely salary, a town and country house, and a retinue of servants; but the proposition was declined with an expression of doubt as to his merits, and a lofty declaration of devotion and duty to the flag of his country.

This modest and distinguished man was the father of Andrew Atkinson Humphreys, the subject of this sketch, born also at Philadelphia, November 2, 1810, died at Washington December 27, 1883. He graduated at the United States Military Academy in 1831, thirteenth in a class of thirty-three members. His most distinguished classmates were Professor Roswell Park, Henry Clay, son of the orator and statesman of that name, Professor Norton of the Sheffield Scientific School, Samuel C. Ridgeley, Horatio P. Van Cleve, William H. Emory, Bradford R. Alden, Samuel R. Curtis and Charles Whittlesey. It will be observed that there are no great names among them, but Emory and Curtis were solid and substantial men, while the others were more or less distinguished in the various walks of life. Indeed, if one will turn over the pages of Cullum's Register he will be struck by the fact that West Point turned out during that period more distinguished professors, divines and civil engineers than soldiers. Vinton and Bledsoe, the divines; Barnard and Barnes, the engineers; Cass, the railroad manager; Bailey, the chemist; Church and Alvord, the mathematicians; Cullum, the scientist and biographer; Dupont, the powder-maker; and Humphrey Marshall, the orator, were all graduates of that

time, and none of them achieved great military distinction. Lee and Meade were contemporaries of these men, and had it not been for the Rebellion, would have been remembered, so long as they were remembered at all, for scholarship and scientific attainments rather than for military achievements. It is, perhaps, true that most of these men who remained in the army were rather too old for active military service when the Rebellion broke out. Humphreys himself was fifty-one; Lee was slightly older, while Meade, Barnard and Cullum were only a few years younger.

Humphreys began his active life in the Second Artillery, and served in garrison, at West Point, in South Carolina, Georgia, Florida and at Cape Cod. He was an excellent draughtsman, and having a decided turn for surveying and engineering was frequently detailed for such work. He took part in the Seminole war and was engaged in the battles of Olokikaha and Micanopy, bearing himself bravely but modestly withal, and gaining experience and breadth of view rather than honor. He was a serious-minded man, whose tendencies, as before indicated, were rather towards engineering and science than to the life of the camp and garrison as an officer of artillery serving as infantry. As there were but few educated civil engineers at that time in the country, and as our system of internal improvements was just being started, Humphreys, after serving five years, resigned his commission in the army and at once accepted service as a civil engineer with Major Bache, then constructing lighthouses on the Delaware Bay.

The Corps of Topographical Engineers was authorized by Congress in 1838, and in July of that year Humphreys was offered and accepted the rank of first lieutenant. From that time forth he led a most active, studious and laborious life, serving on the harbor works and defences of the Great Lakes, in the Bureau of Topographical Engineers at Washington, in the Florida war, on the construction of a bridge at

Washington, again in the Bureau of Topographical Engineers, and then in charge of the Coast Survey office. He reached the rank of Captain in 1848, and for the next twelve years had charge of the surveys and examinations of the Mississippi River and its delta, with a view to the improvement of its navigation and the protection of its lowlands from inundation. In the later years of this great work, and especially in the preparation of his report upon the Hydraulics of the Mississippi, he had the assistance of that distinguished scientist and soldier, Henry L. Abbot. The result of their joint labors brought their names into distinction throughout the world, and it is justly regarded as an enduring monument to their learning and ability. While on this exacting duty, Humphreys broke down and was permitted to visit Europe for the double purpose of restoring his health and studying the means of protecting delta rivers from overflow. On his return, in 1854, he was assigned to the additional duty at Washington of supervising and directing the explorations and survey which Congress had authorized for the purpose of deciding upon the location, feasibility and relative advantage of the various routes, for a railroad or a system of railroads to connect the Mississippi River with the Pacific Ocean.

At that time the railroad system of this continent was in its youth, if not its infancy, and the construction of a line to the Pacific, as first suggested by Senator Breese, of Illinois, was deemed to be an event of the indefinite future if not entirely impossible. But Humphreys, scarcely yet recovered from the breakdown which culminated in a sunstroke in 1851, threw himself with his accustomed intensity into the task of bringing the results of the surveys into order. "His mind," said his friend, Lieutenant Abbot, "worked like a beautiful machine — neglecting nothing and forgetting nothing." His preliminary report was finished before Congress adjourned, and contained such conclusions and recommendations as fully justified at a later and more important period the

location and construction of the first line of railroad to the Pacific Ocean.

Humphreys was one of those men who were never idle. He worked night and day, and the more he worked the more the Government seemed to pile upon his willing shoulders. In 1855, he was made a member of the Lighthouse Board, on which he served till 1862. About the same time he was made a member of a board, and afterwards of a commission, to revise the programme of instruction, and to examine into the organization and system of discipline at the Military Academy. The high duties to which he was assigned brought him in contact with the leading men, and especially with the leading politicians of the day. He had come to be an authority on all questions of science, and especially of engineering, and was consulted freely on nearly all the great public works contemplated or carried on by the Government. During the decade preceding the Rebellion no public character wielded a greater influence over the public works, especially such as were carried on by the army, than Jefferson Davis, Senator from Mississippi, and Secretary of War. A man of extraordinary industry, perspicacity and decision, he, of course, discovered the abilities of Humphreys, and utilized them fully. A warm personal and official friendship sprang up between them, and when the war broke out, it subjected Humphreys to a suspicion on the part of those above him, which was as unjust as it was injurious. It gave rise to the false report that Humphreys was lukewarm in his loyalty, and would go South and cast in his lot with the nascent Confederacy. That a scientist and a *savant* of his distinction would have been warmly welcomed by Davis to the standard which he had set up, there can be no doubt; but that Humphreys ever wavered for a moment in his loyalty, or ever dreamed of giving aid and comfort to the Rebellion, there is not the slightest ground for supposing. His whole life, both before and after the commencement of hostilities, gives the lie to the



suggestion, and it may be dismissed as an idle and baseless rumor. Always an observant and reflective man, he doubtless noted with an anxious soul the signs of the coming storm; but that he ever thought of avoiding it, or of playing any other part in it than that of a loyal and patriotic soldier, no man who had the good fortune to know him will ever believe.

The outbreak of the Rebellion found him in Washington. He had passed his fiftieth year. Never a man of robust frame or turbulent vitality, his studious life and profound study, no less than his age and appearance, had marked him rather for the cabinet and council than for the field, and yet he made haste to seek active service, and was assigned to duty with McClellan, when the latter became General-in-Chief of the Army. The numerous resignations which took place at and before that time had brought him to the rank of Major. Shortly afterwards, he was appointed Additional Aide-de-Camp with the rank of Colonel, and this was followed in a few weeks by the commission of Brigadier-General of Volunteers. He accompanied McClellan with the Army of the Potomac to the Peninsula, and as Chief Topographical Engineer took part in all the operations and battles of that ill-starred campaign. He it was who, accompanied by General Henry J. Hunt, Chief of Artillery, selected and established the impregnable line on which the Army of the Potomac fought and won the bloody battle of Malvern Hill, and it has always been a matter of profound regret with those who knew him best, that he, instead of McClellan, had not been at that time in supreme command. The opportunity was one of the greatest ever offered to a commander, and if improved by McClellan, as it should have been, by a vigorous offensive, might have led to the capture of Richmond and to an entirely different course of events in that unfortunate year. McClellan mentions Humphreys, in his Report of the Peninsula Campaign, as having performed his duty ably and well, under great and

unusual difficulties,<sup>1</sup> but does not give him special credit in connection with the battle of Malvern Hill. Hay and Nicolay, however, in the *Life of Lincoln*, assert positively that it was Humphreys who selected the position and indicated the line upon which the battle was fought.<sup>2</sup> Colonel Carswell McClellan, formerly of Humphreys' staff, brings out and clearly establishes the fact.<sup>3</sup>

On the 12th of September, 1862, Halleck, then General-in-Chief, assigned Humphreys to the command of the Third Division of Fitz John Porter's Fifth Corps, composed entirely of new Pennsylvania troops, just passing through Washington to join the Army of the Potomac in Maryland. They were poorly equipped and armed, without adequate transportation or rations, and, like all new troops, overstocked with baggage. Through his own personal exertions, and the help of a hastily improvised staff, their wants were supplied as far as it was possible to supply them, and on the morning of the 14th, the division began its march through Monocacy and Frederick to join the army at Antietam. It arrived on the field on the morning of the 18th, having marched twenty-three miles since half past three the afternoon before. Prior to leaving Washington, however, Humphreys received a sharp note from Halleck, saying, if he "did not join his division immediately in the field, he would be arrested."<sup>4</sup> Inasmuch as he had lost no time, but had displayed extraordinary energy in preparing his command for the march, the threat made no change in his movements, but it produced a wound which rankled deeply. Humphreys, although a man of even temper and gentle manners, was not the person to submit tamely to an outrage from any one. Ordinarily as amiable as a nun, he was as fierce as a tiger when enraged. Kindly and considerate to others, he expected courteous treatment from high and low alike, and so, when the General-in-Chief

<sup>1</sup> 5 W. R., 25.

<sup>2</sup> 5 N. & H., 436-437.

<sup>3</sup> McClellan's *Humphreys*, 1-9.

<sup>4</sup> 27 W. R., 368, 372.

misjudged and insulted him, he waited only for a pause in the campaign to request an investigation of his conduct by a court of inquiry. His letter to the Secretary of War,<sup>1</sup> giving a most spirited account of how he had performed his duty in Washington and on the march, was followed six days afterwards by another, which not only corrected a misstatement made by McClellan, reflecting on the way in which his troops had arrived on the field, but brought into prominence the unusual celerity with which they had marched, and the fortitude with which these raw levies had sustained privation and fatigue.<sup>2</sup> These communications showed in addition that Humphreys knew his rights and would submit to no injustice either to himself or his command. It does not appear that any action was ever taken on his request for a court of inquiry, nor, on the other hand, does it appear that any reparation was ever offered for the injustice done him by Halleck and McClellan.

The appearance of Humphreys on the bloody but doubtful field of Antietam was timely and reassuring. Although travel-stained, he presented at the head of his enthusiastic Pennsylvanians a cheerful and confident figure. He was a gentleman of perfect manners and habits, who always used the regulation equipments and wore the regulation uniform. His gloves and footwear were faultless; his fine and intelligent face was clean-shaven, except as to the mustache; his eyes were gray and full of kindness, except when aroused by anger. He was about five feet, seven inches high, erect and graceful in carriage, and weighed at that time not far from one hundred and fifty pounds. There was nothing rough or harsh about him. Calmness, composure and self-confidence, without the slightest trace of assumption or bravado, were apparent in every feature. Altogether he was as prepossessing a figure in whatever aspect he was viewed as could be found in that or any other army. Like Cæsar at a

<sup>1</sup> 27 W. R., 368.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, 373.

corresponding age, his military career was all before him; but unlike Cæsar he had led only a virtuous and studious life, without thirst for power, and with no ambition, except to serve his country and to assist in the maintenance of its unity, under the Constitution and the laws.

During the torpid pursuit of Lee's army into Virginia, Humphreys took a leading part whenever opportunity offered; but nothing occurred to bring him into special prominence till the disastrous battle of Fredericksburg was fought. In the assault of Marye's Heights, rendered impregnable by a stone wall and dry ditch, or rifle trench, which skirt their base for a mile, he displayed the courage of a paladin combined with the abilities of a general. The ground over which his division was compelled to advance was encumbered by men of other organizations, many of whom were lying down to escape the destructive fire of the enemy. Humphreys, seeing that musketry could accomplish nothing, ordered his men to draw the charges from their guns and use the bayonet, and by the help of his staff, brigade and regimental commanders led them over the prostrate forms of their fellow soldiers, and as far towards the enemy's lines as it was possible for men to go against such a storm as the well-sheltered rebels poured upon them. Horse after horse was killed under him; but apparently unconscious of danger he tried again and again to accomplish the impossible task which had been so inconsiderately set for him. His gallantry and aggressive leadership were the admiration of all who beheld him upon that memorable occasion. They made him easily the most conspicuous figure on the field that day. In admiration for his conduct, no less than as a rebuke to others, Burnside, the army commander, in a personal interview with the President, strongly recommended him for promotion to the rank of Major-General. He had richly deserved it; but the reward was not bestowed upon him till he had shown at Chancellorsville, and again at Gettysburg, that he was one

of the most courageous and stubborn fighters in the army, as well as one of its bravest and most competent generals.

His conduct at Fredericksburg, and his explanation of the failure to carry the enemy's position, have led to a discussion between General Walker and Colonel McClellan, into the merits of which it is not necessary to enter here. It is adverted to now merely for the purpose of emphasizing the statement in which all agree, that the personal bravery and the leadership displayed upon that occasion were of the highest order. All who have written about them, as well as all who witnessed them, concur in this statement. His perfect intrepidity and unshaken self-possession are admirably exemplified by his conduct on that occasion. "As the bugle sounded the charge," says Colonel McClellan, "General Humphreys turned to his staff, and, bowing with uncovered head, remarked as quietly and pleasantly as if inviting them to be seated around his table, 'Gentlemen, I shall lead this charge; I presume, of course, you will wish to ride with me.'"<sup>1</sup> And they did ride with him right gallantly! Of the seven who started five were dismounted and four wounded before the charge ceased. When it is remembered that his own son was one of the seven, and that with unobtrusive modesty he interposed himself as often as possible between his father and the rebel fire,<sup>2</sup> it will be admitted that courage is an inherited virtue in that family.

The limits of this paper will not permit a detailed account of General Humphreys' services during the Chancellorsville and the Gettysburg campaigns; but they were characterized by the same unflinching energy and zeal, the same aggressive courage, and the same clear military sense he had always displayed. Although it can hardly be claimed that the Army of the Potomac as a whole was engaged at Chancellorsville, Humphreys' division had a bloody encounter with the enemy near the Chancellor House, and maintained its high reputation

<sup>1</sup> McClellan's *Humphreys*, 15.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, 34.

for steadiness and courage. He disapproved the defensive attitude which Hooker assumed; and, if he could have had his way, would have fought an offensive aggressive battle. Shortly after the army withdrew to the north side of the Rappahannock, the time of most of Humphreys' men having expired, his division was broken up, much to the regret of Meade, who had succeeded Porter in command of the corps, and Humphreys was transferred to Berry's old division, the Second of the Third Corps, then under Sickles.

In the march to Gettysburg, and in the position assigned to him, Humphreys displayed his usual self-reliance and ability; and in the battle added greatly to his renown. Having shown his old division at Fredericksburg how to make an assault, it was now his good fortune to show his new division how to receive one. It will be remembered that Sickles, after having taken position in the general line, moved to the front about five hundred yards and occupied a ridge between Cemetery Hill and Round Top; this exposed the entire corps to great danger, inasmuch as its isolated position invited attack and deprived it of ready support. It does not appear from any reports that are accessible that Humphreys, who was without any doubt the best topographer in either army, was consulted in regard to the selection of this advanced line, but it is perhaps a fair assumption that he did not object to it. It was evidently good enough ground to fight on; and might have been maintained, had the general line of battle been made to conform to, and support, this part of it. Be this as it may, Humphreys was in no way responsible for anything except the defense of the position to which he had been assigned. His duty was merely to obey orders and fight his division, which was most fiercely attacked, both in front and flank, in the afternoon of the second day. Speaking of it himself, he said he had never been under a hotter fire of artillery and musketry combined. In defending and withdrawing his own batteries, in changing front to rear

on his right under orders, and finally in falling back to a better position, in the face of a terrible onslaught from the enemy, he displayed the most stubborn and tenacious courage, combined with the most surprising capacity to meet the emergencies of battle. His manœuvres upon that occasion were not unlike Sheridan's at Stone River; but there is reason to believe that they called for a much higher order of tactical skill on his own part, and for greater steadiness and coherence on the part of his division. An eye-witness speaks in the highest terms of Humphreys' personal bearing upon that occasion: "Throwing himself into the midst of the battle," closely followed by his staff, all of whom were eager "to ride with him" upon this occasion, he was like a knight of old, ever seeking the thickest of the fight, sustaining and encouraging his men. In the hottest of the conflict one of his staff (Captain Chester) convulsively throwing up his hands, called out, "General, I'm shot;" whereupon the latter, who had noted the gallantry of this officer, went at once to his assistance, and sustained him in his saddle till a brother officer could take him in charge and conduct him to a place of safety. Almost instantaneously, a cannon shot disembowelled the wounded officer's horse and took off the head of the orderly who had started to lead him to the rear. At the same moment, General Humphreys' own horse, already bleeding from seven bullet wounds, was struck by a shell, and, springing convulsively into the air, threw the General violently to the ground, but fortunately the fall inflicted no serious injury. Gathering himself up as best he could, he was soon remounted and engaged as calmly in the exercise of his command as if nothing unusual had happened.

Nothing appeared to shake the nerves or to disturb the equanimity of this remarkable man. With the gentle and refined manner and habits of a scholar, he seemed to fairly revel in the storm of battle. He never sought shelter nor dismounted so long as he could find a horse to ride, and

scorned to remain in the rear when the slightest duty was to be performed in front. All who have witnessed his conduct in battle concur in the statement that it was simply perfect, as if inspired solely by the sense of duty and absolutely uninfluenced by danger or the sense of fear. No emergency ever found him unprepared, no fire unwilling to face it. The only wonder is that an officer of such conspicuous intrepidity should have escaped alive from any battle in which his troops took part. By whatever scale it is measured, Gettysburg was a great battle. It certified the quality of American bravery as well as American generalship to the world; it rendered the name of Meade and Hancock and Warren on the one side and of Lee and Longstreet and Pickett on the other, immortal; but it also made known to such as will read the story that there was no stouter heart in either host than that which beat within the breast of Andrew Atkinson Humphreys.

It is now known that when Meade's promotion to the command of the Army of the Potomac was announced, his first thought was of Humphreys for Chief of Staff, and that he notified that distinguished officer that the position was at his disposition. It is also known that the latter declined the honor offered him, in order that he might participate in the impending battle with his division. Four days after it was over, he accepted the position and entered at once upon the performance of his onerous duties. For sixteen months he was constantly by the side of his friend and chief, supporting and sustaining him in every trial, and relieving him of a multitude of duties, by his wise counsel and ceaseless supervision of details. It was a period of mingled hope and disappointment, of long marches and indecisive conflicts; but it was also a period of freedom from great disaster, which showed that the army was handled with skill and prudence, if not with conspicuous ability. During this period it was engaged in the pursuit of Lee, back to Virginia,



in the action of Manassas Gap, in the march of the Rapidan, in the operations on the Rappahannock and the combat at Bristoe Station, in the abortive movement to Mine Run, and finally in that wonderful series of battles and marches beginning in the Wilderness and including Spottsylvania, North Anna, Totopotamoy, Cold Harbor, the passage of the James, the attack and siege of Petersburg, and the affairs at the Weldon Railroad, Peeble's Farm, and the Boydton Plank Road.

Just what part Humphreys, as Chief of Staff, took in devising the plans in accordance with which these operations were conducted, or what influence he had in causing their adoption, it is to be feared, can never be definitely ascertained. The official reports are silent upon such questions, and Humphreys himself, if he ever made any record, died without giving it to the world. In the "Virginia Campaign of 1864 and 1865"<sup>1</sup> he says he drew up two projects for the initial movements of the army, and intimated that neither was fully adopted. A close reading of the text suggests the inference that he would have pushed the whole army through the Wilderness on the first day's march, and thus compelled Lee to give battle in the open country beyond. This result might or might not have been attained, and it is possible that it would not have brought victory to the Union arms, but, however great the hazard or the uncertainty, one cannot help wishing that the plans had been arranged and carried out in accordance with this idea.

It is worthy of note, that the presence of Grant, as the Lieutenant-General commanding all the Union armies, with the Army of the Potomac, without assuming immediate command of it, was unfortunate in many respects. It distributed instead of concentrated responsibility, and frequently gave rise to delays in the transmission and the execution of orders, in uncertainty, if not misunderstanding,

<sup>1</sup> 12 Campaigns of the Civil War, 12.

as to details and who should work them out, and to a lack of harmony and coherence in their execution, which was frequently fatal to success. Grant, always considerate and kindly, endeavored as far as possible to give his orders in general terms and leave the details and the execution to Meade and his staff; but with all their loyalty and ability, the result was in many cases far from satisfactory. Looking back over the events of that long and unhappy year, as they are now recorded, there seems to be but little doubt that Grant would have done far better had he assumed immediate command of the army and assigned Meade, and even Humphreys, to the command of corps, for which both were pre-eminently fitted.

It is almost useless to dwell upon the services of Humphreys as Chief of Staff, for there are but few materials at our command bearing upon the subject. It is known, of course, that while the grand and battle tactics of that campaign were of the simplest sort, the logistics were in many respects of the highest order. The dispositions for both direct and flank movements, for the passage of rivers, for the supply and subsistence of the troops, and for the care of the sick and wounded, were generally as good as it was possible to make them. In all of these matters the genius of Humphreys is apparent, and it is only fair to assume that whatever was wrong was due to the dual system of command, rather than to neglect on the part of the Chief of Staff to the Army of the Potomac. This remark is particularly applicable to the failure of the plan to take Petersburg, in connection with which both Meade and Hancock are understood to have claimed that if they had known that the Lieutenant-General intended that Smith should take Petersburg, and that they were expected to co-operate with him, "Petersburg would have been taken." Without dwelling longer upon the interesting but obscure relations which subsisted between Grant and Meade and between Meade and Humphreys, it is proper

to remark that Humphreys was the breakwater and protector of every officer doing business with Meade's headquarters. He was patient and considerate with all, always accessible, always scrupulously kind and polite, and always ready to listen and explain. In every personal aspect he was a model Chief of Staff, and made every one who approached him, whether officer or private, feel that he had found a friend in him. It is an open secret, however, that as the campaign approached its final stages, Grant, without making any formal change in the faulty organization, assumed day by day a more direct control over the two armies and the various corps operating against Lee. Perceiving that this would ultimately result in his practical supersession, and that he would have less and less use for a Chief of Staff of such ability and distinction as Humphreys, Meade availed himself of Hancock's retirement, on account of wounds and disability, from the command of the Second Corps, to secure the place for Humphreys and fill the vacancy on his staff by calling General Alexander S. Webb to the place.

The change was a welcome one; for, although Meade, notwithstanding his irascible temper and the embarrassing circumstances by which he was surrounded, had always treated Humphreys with marked kindness and consideration, it is not to be disguised that the latter longed for the opportunities of an active command. In assuming his new position, after a natural expression of diffidence in succeeding so distinguished a soldier as Hancock, he modestly added, "I can only promise you that I shall try to do my duty and preserve your reputation unsullied, relying upon you to sustain me by that skill and courage which you have so conspicuously displayed on so many fields."<sup>1</sup>

This change took place on the 26th of November, 1864, and marks a new and still more glorious era in the career of General Humphreys. The Second Corps was not a stranger

<sup>1</sup> 89 W. R., 714.

to him, nor was he to it. They had known each other long and well, and had perfect confidence in each other; but they were destined to become still better acquainted and to conceive a still higher respect for each other. Although General Humphreys as Chief of Staff had assured General Wilson on the 22d of June that the Army of the Potomac would at once extend its left across the railroads leading south from Petersburg to the Appomattox, it had as yet utterly failed to do so, and although those railroads had been broken for nine weeks, at one time so that nothing on wheels could pass over them, Lee had managed to draw his supplies regularly from Hicksford, forty miles south of Petersburg on the Weldon Road, by wagons which passed round and almost in sight of the left flank of the Union army. It is an interesting coincidence that Humphreys on the 6th of February, 1865, nearly eight months after his assurances to General Wilson, began the movement which finally broke up this line and marked the beginning of the end. Gregg's division of cavalry had been sent out, and the Third and Fifth Corps were ordered to support his movement. Hatcher's Run was bridged and crossed, and a severe action was had, which resulted in the extension of the Federal entrenchments to the Vaughan road. Humphreys held the extreme left, with the Fifth Corps in close support. The Weldon railroad was at last firmly in their hands and the rebel supply-line broken. On the 25th of March, Lee, aiming a counter-blow at the Union base of supplies at City Point, sent Gordon on his desperate mission against Fort Stedman. After he was hurled back by Parke's splendid fighting, Wright and Humphreys, with the Sixth and Third Corps, made a gallant *ri-poste*, gaining ground, which enabled Wright to deliver his fatal blow on the 2d of April.

Meanwhile Grant had sent Sheridan still further out towards Dinwiddie Court House, where he was so roughly handled by Pickett and Fitz Lee on the 31st. Again

Humphreys and Warren were in support, but the rains had commenced, the creeks were swollen, and the roads almost impassable with mud. Warren met with delay and temporary disaster; but Humphreys, with Miles's division, struck the successful rebels in front and flank, and drove them beyond the White Oak road, capturing three hundred prisoners. Thus the Union forces cut and held firm possession of another line of supply and possible retreat. On the 1st and 2d of April, Humphreys carried the rebel works in his front, and pushed his leading division, again under Miles, to the Southside Railroad at Sutherland's Station, thus, for the first time after the cavalry had broken it at the same spot nine months before, getting firm possession of that railroad and every closing avenue of retreat from Petersburg on the south side of the Appomattox River. This movement towards Sutherland's was disapproved, to the disgust of Humphreys, and Miles was recalled to join in the direct advance upon Petersburg. But the game was up, the rebel works had been carried by assault, the right of their army overthrown, and their roads all closed. There was nothing left for them to do but to run for it; and thanks to Humphreys, still more than to Sheridan or to any other man, the only roads for retreat left open were those on the north side of the river by Bevel's and Goode's bridges to Amelia Court House.

Lee withdrew from Petersburg on the night of April 2, and the next day the pursuit began, Sheridan with the cavalry, and the Fifth Corps moving on Jetersville; Humphreys with the Second Corps to the northward, on the road to Amelia Court House. On the morning of the 4th, Lee reached the Court House, where he lost a day to let his baggage catch up. The delay was fatal, for it enabled the Second and Sixth Corps to join Sheridan at Jetersville, and bar the road to Burkesville and the south. The cavalry alone could not have done this, for the rebel infantry could have brushed it easily out of the way. But when Lee found himself confronted

by the Federal infantry, he marched northward and then westward, evidently hoping to pass round the Federal left and reach Farmville or Rice's Station. Humphreys, being in advance on the left, was the first to discover this movement, and made haste to follow the enemy's retreating footsteps. The Fifth and Sixth Corps joined eagerly in the pursuit, all striving to their utmost to bring the enemy to bay. A running fight for fourteen miles took place between pursued and pursuers. "Lines of battle," says Humphreys, "followed closely on the skirmish line with a rapidity and nearness of connection that I believe to be unexampled, and which I confess astonished me."<sup>1</sup> Flat Creek, a stream from eighty to a hundred feet wide, scarcely caused a pause in Humphreys' hurrying march. At Sailor's Creek the gallant Gordon made a desperate stand, but was again overborne with the loss of three guns, thirteen colors, seventy ambulances, more than two hundred wagons, and many prisoners. Meanwhile Ewell's corps were split off by Humphreys, and captured by the cavalry. After the terrible disaster of this day, Longstreet, who had reached Rice's Station, abandoned the hope of getting off to the south, turned westward and crossed again to the north side of the Appomattox River at Farmville, while Gordon with the other half of the rebels crossed at High Bridge, thus dividing what there was left of Lee's army.

At half past five, on the 7th, the sleepless Humphreys resumed the pursuit by the road nearest the river, and reached High Bridge just as the last rebels who had crossed after blowing up the redoubt, which served as a bridgehead, were setting fire to both the wagon bridge and the railroad bridge. Barlow's division, directed by Humphreys, led by Barlow in person, succeeded in putting out the fire and saving both bridges. The way was now clear for the whole corps to cross, which it lost no time in doing. Miles's and

<sup>1</sup> 95 W. R., 682.

De Trobriand's divisions pushed out on the main road for Lynchburg, pressing heavily upon the enemy's rear, while Barlow's division followed the river by the left hand westerly to Farmville, which he found strongly occupied by the enemy. The rest of the Federal Army was south of Farmville, and separated from Humphreys by the Appomattox River, but this did not cause him to stay his advance. At about one o'clock he came up with the enemy, strongly entrenched and covering both the stage and plank roads leading through Appomattox Court House to Lynchburg. Sending word to Barlow to re-establish connection with his left, and requesting Meade to bring forward the other corps of infantry, Humphreys endeavored to find a weak spot in the enemy's line; and, failing in that, tried to turn his left. In this he was also unsuccessful, shortly after which night put an end to the conflict.

During the entire operations of the 7th, Humphreys received no help whatever from any other part of the Federal Army, except Crook's cavalry division, which late in the day forded the river and made a demonstration in his favor. There is but little doubt that the presence of the other corps of infantry would have enabled Humphreys to overwhelm Lee and bring the conflict to a close on that day; but the scattered condition of the pursuing army, the time lost in transmitting information, the difficulty of crossing the Appomattox, and the obvious advantage of placing the cavalry and at least one corps of infantry athwart the road upon which Lee was retreating, all intervened to prevent the realization of Humphreys' hopes upon that memorable occasion. On the other hand, it is more than probable, as claimed by General Humphreys, that if his corps had not "crossed the Appomattox on the 7th, he [Lee] could have reached New Store that night, Appomattox Station on the afternoon of the 8th, obtained rations there, and moved that evening toward Lynchburg. A march the next day, the 9th, would

have brought him to Lynchburg.”<sup>1</sup> Following the narrative of General Walker in the History of the Second Army Corps,<sup>2</sup> it may be fairly contended that Humphreys compelled Lee to lose time at “Farmville Heights” which he could not regain by night marches, kept him from obtaining the much needed supplies waiting for him at Appomattox Station, and secured for Sheridan and Ord the opportunity to post themselves across his path at Appomattox Court House. It is also worthy of note that Grant’s first letter to Lee demanding the surrender of his army was delivered from Humphreys’ front about half past seven on the evening of the 7th, and that Lee returned his answer within an hour by the same route. Grant, Ord and Wright rested that night at Farmville, about eight miles in rear of Humphreys’ position.

There is but little more to relate. Lee abandoned his position under the cover of darkness and was again followed at half past five the next morning by Humphreys, now supported by Wright with the Sixth Corps. Sheridan with the Cavalry Corps, the Fifth Corps, and the Army of the James, pushed forward by the road on the south side of the Appomattox towards Appomattox Station. His advanced division under Custer reached there late in the afternoon, cutting the last supply-line and capturing the trains containing the last provisions the Confederacy had left for Lee’s starving army. The end came next day, and Humphreys’ “foot cavalry” was in at the death. His unerring instinct for the chase, his terrible persistency and aggressive temper, together with the astonishing celerity of his movements, had enabled him to outstrip everything but the cavalry, and to keep fully abreast with even that. The details of the surrender, which took place on the 9th, have been told and retold a hundred times, and while their interest never ceases, the limits of this paper will not permit their repetition here; but read and

<sup>1</sup> 12 Campaigns of the Civil War, 391. <sup>2</sup> Walker, 685, *et seq.*



study the wonderful story as you will, one fact cannot be avoided or suppressed. If Sheridan was the hero of the cavalry in those splendid operations, Humphreys was beyond all doubt the hero of the infantry. His services in that campaign brought him to the very front rank of corps commanders, and showed him to be possessed of the highest military talents. Had the war continued there can be but little doubt that he would have soon passed into the list of army commanders, wherein, if his life had been spared, he would most surely have gained imperishable renown.

And now let us compare him, as far as we may, with the other distinguished men of his own rank in either army. After this brief narrative, it will be readily admitted that in trustworthy courage and professional skill, in battle or on the march, he was the equal of any man on either side. He was certainly not surpassed in those virtues by either Hancock or Longstreet, Sheridan or Forrest, McPherson or Gordon, Upton or Cleburne, and no others need be named in this comparison. In tactical resources he was also the equal, if not the superior, of any or all of these great soldiers, with the possible exception of Upton. As a disciplinarian and military administrator he was in every respect as good if not better than the best. He was a far more accomplished, as well as a more aggressive man, than the lamented McPherson, and was his equal in urbanity and politeness. He had a better temper and a more even and trustworthy mental organization than Sherman, and, of course, his scientific knowledge and equipment were much superior to those of either Grant or Thomas. In some respects, notably in modesty, lofty pride, self-respect, and in quiet power, he resembled the latter most strikingly; but, it is to be observed, he was a much quicker man in his mental processes than either of the generals just named. Whether he would have borne the responsibilities of supreme command as Grant or Lee did, or of an independent army as Meade, Thomas and Sheridan did, must forever

remain a matter of conjecture ; but reasoning from what we know of his conduct in inferior positions, it may fairly be assumed that he would have acquitted himself with credit, and might have done so with extraordinary distinction. Certain it is that, like the impatient runner in the Olympian games, he would never have merited the lash for starting up too soon, nor, like the laggard, have failed to deserve his crown by being left at the beginning of the race. Altogether, he was a very able, very loyal, very perfect soldier, with all the virtues of the heroic age and none of the vices or foibles of the times and profession to which he belonged. His parts were all in perfect harmony with each other, and he with his environment.

Before closing this paper it is proper to remark that these four years of actual war, with all the chances they presented to Humphreys for distinguishing himself as a general, were after all only a glorious episode in the life of a scholar and a *savant*. When it had passed he returned modestly to his books and his scientific employment and added nearly twenty years more of useful labor, as Chief Engineer of the Army, to the great sum of his faithful and conscientious services to his country. Those who knew him only in his last position would never have imagined him to have been one of the best and stanchest corps commanders on either side of the Great Rebellion.

GENERAL McCLELLAN.

BY

JOHN C. ROPES.

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## GENERAL McCLELLAN.<sup>1</sup>

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IN the biographical sketch of General McClellan which is contributed by Mr. William C. Prime, we are informed that the General wrote this narrative not for the public, but solely for the information of his children; that "he did not labor at it continuously, with intent to produce a book, but wrote as the humor seized him." Any one carefully reading the story would, we think, be likely to frame some such conjecture as this as to its genesis. It is an easy, flowing narrative, not logically or even chronologically arranged, with few precise statements of the questions in regard to which there has been so much contention, and very little, if any, useful discussion of the points when they happen to be reached in the course of the story. There is not the slightest effort to write from any other than McClellan's own standpoint. Never was there a controversial work in which the other side was more calmly ignored. There is in McClellan's mind, evidently, no room for the exercise of such a virtue as impartiality in dealing with such fools and knaves as the members of Mr. Lincoln's cabinet in 1861 and 1862. He has no doubt whatever that he was the divinely appointed man by whom the country was to be saved. His egotism is simply colossal, — there is no other word for it. And all is said with such an utter unconsciousness of there being anything absurd in his

<sup>1</sup> McClellan's Own Story. The War for the Union: the soldiers who fought it; the civilians who directed it; and his relations to it and to them. By George B. McClellan, late Major-General commanding the Armies. New York: Charles L. Webster & Co. 1887.

assuming for himself such a unique position, that the book must rank as one of the most characteristic autobiographies ever written.

Besides the narrative, we have copious extracts from McClellan's letters to his wife, and surely nothing that has ever been given to the public has disclosed a man's real character more fully and frankly than these letters disclose that of General McClellan. They have all the peculiarities of the autobiography, only they possess the flavor of the time, and are much more pointed in diction. They show us a highly emotional man, extremely fond of his family and of domestic life,— a man, too, of quick and warm religious feelings. They show us a man who likes to have everybody around him believe in him, who loves his soldiers for their manifest confidence in him, who has the strongest dislike of all criticism and of all supervision, who has an almost puerile impatience to escape from the neighborhood of Washington to the distant camps of the Peninsula, where the cheers of the troops should replace the cold and somewhat sceptical talk of the drawing-rooms and lobbies of the capital.

In fact, McClellan is seen to live very much in a world of his own making. His imagination creates a great part of the circumstances which appear to surround him. In his mind the Confederates are always seeking to devour him; they are pressing him in on every side. Were it not for his wise counsel and strong arm, the country would be lost. The problem with him is not so much how can the Rebellion be put down, as how can the country be saved. His enemies invariably outnumber him, sometimes two to one. Twice he saves the capital. Once he saves Maryland and Pennsylvania also. No one, in his judgment, but himself could have brought order out of the confusion which reigned after the first Bull Run. Under no other commander than himself, in his own opinion, would the Army of the Potomac have marched to drive the enemy out of Maryland after the second Bull Run. It is

needless to expose the futility of such assumptions. Their truth is contradicted by the behavior of the army on many a bloody and disastrous field, long after McClellan had been retired from command. Yet McClellan seems to cherish these and the like opinions as if there could be no controversy as to their correctness.

It is not from the narrative of such a man as this that one can expect to learn the facts, and in truth there is no serious attempt to give them. There are, so far as we have seen, absolutely no corrections of the many errors with which his Report, large portions of which, with the accompanying despatches, are incorporated into his narrative, abounds. We are not told that the enemy did not, in fact, as McClellan thought and said at the time, outnumber our army during the Seven Days' battles. We are still allowed to believe that they were "largely superior to us in number" at the battle of Antietam. Both these estimates were known in 1881, when McClellan began the writing of this book, to be grossly incorrect; but inasmuch as to change them would involve a restatement of his case against the administration, McClellan has chosen to let the original and erroneous statements stand.

We have said above that McClellan was greatly influenced by his imagination and feelings. Nothing can better illustrate this than his neglect to obtain explicit assurances from the Navy Department and from the naval officers on duty at Fortress Monroe in regard to the co-operation of the navy in the reduction of Yorktown and Gloucester. He had, early in the winter, set his heart upon operating by the way of the lower Chesapeake upon Richmond. All the opposition to this plan manifested by the President and cabinet only served to make him more determined, more bound to have his own way. It was an essential feature of this plan that there should be "a combined naval and land attack upon Yorktown. . . . the navy should at once concentrate upon the York River all their available and most powerful batteries. Its reduction should

not, in that case, require many hours.”<sup>1</sup> We pause an instant to remark that it is evident from this statement that McClellan could not have been aware, when he wrote it, that the works at Yorktown were at a height of some seventy or eighty feet above the river. Had he known this, — and he surely ought to have known it, — he could not have supposed for a moment that the place could be taken by the fleet. But not only did he know nothing about the strength of the place against which it was, to use his own language, “absolutely necessary, for the prompt success of this campaign, that the navy should at once throw its whole available force,”<sup>2</sup> but when he wrote this letter the Merrimac had made her appearance, had destroyed the Congress and the Cumberland, and nothing but the Monitor could be relied upon to give her battle. Letters passed between McClellan and the Navy Department upon this subject. All that was promised, so the naval men said, was that the Merrimac should not be allowed to go up York River. It was stated explicitly to General McClellan, so they always maintained, that to watch the Merrimac would require the main portion of the fleet, and that no naval force could be detached to attack the batteries at Yorktown. In his Report,<sup>3</sup> McClellan denied these statements, and said that he discovered this to be the case only after his arrival at Yorktown; that it was “contrary to what had been previously stated to” him, “and materially affected” his “plans.” This accusation is repeated in the book before us.<sup>4</sup>

But Mr. Prime has unearthed from McClellan’s papers a letter to him from General Barnard, the Chief Engineer of the Army of the Potomac, who was sent to the Peninsula before the army was embarked, on purpose to make arrangements with the navy. This letter, which, so far as we know, has never elsewhere been published, is dated “Steamship Minnesota [then in Hampton Roads], March 20, 1862.” From it we make the following extracts: —

<sup>1</sup> 5 W. R., 58.<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*<sup>3</sup> 12 W. R., 8.<sup>4</sup> O. S., 254, 264.



“He [Flag Officer Goldsborough] says he is responsible to the country for keeping down the Merrimac, and has perfect confidence that he can do it, but cannot spare from here anything except the following: —

“Victoria — two eight-inch guns and one thirty-two pound Parrott;

“Anacostia, Freeborn, Island Belle — Potomac fleet;

“Octoroon — not yet arrived; Fox calls her a regular gunboat of four guns;

“Currituck — merchant steamer like the Potomac gunboats, I suppose;

“Daylight — merchant steamer like the Potomac gunboats, I suppose; and two regular gunboats — the Chocorua, not yet arrived, and the Penobscot, here — these two carrying each two eleven-inch guns.

“*He says he can't furnish vessels to attack Yorktown simultaneously,*<sup>1</sup> but he thinks what you propose is easily done; that the vessels he mentions are fully adequate to cover a landing, and that, with a landing and an advance from here, Yorktown will fall.”<sup>2</sup>

Here, then, we have the naval officer in command at Hampton Roads distinctly telling the Chief Engineer of McClellan's army that the main business of the navy is to “keep down” the Merrimac; that consequently he can spare but very few vessels even for the purpose of covering the landing of McClellan's army on the Peninsula; and that he certainly cannot furnish ships with which to attack the forts. Nothing could be more explicit, more definite, more directly calculated to destroy any hope that McClellan might previously have entertained of the active co-operation of the navy in the reduction of Yorktown and Gloucester.

This letter of General Barnard's must have reached McClellan ten days before he started for the Peninsula. What explanation, then, can be given of his statements before referred to?

<sup>1</sup> The italics in all cases in this paper are ours.

<sup>2</sup> O. S., 246-247.

It is not easy, it must be confessed, to frame any explanation or justification of them. The excuse of forgetfulness will hardly answer, for Barnard's letter treated of a matter of prime and vital importance. What we believe about it is this: there are men so peculiarly constituted that when they have once set their hearts on any project, they cannot bear to consider the facts that militate against their carrying it out; they are impatient and intolerant of them; such facts either completely fall out of their minds, so to speak, as if they had never been heard of, or, if they subsequently make themselves felt, they seem to men of this temper to have assumed an inimical aspect, and, what is worse, inasmuch as it is impossible for any man to get angry with facts, such men instinctively fix upon certain individuals, whom they associate in some way, more or less remote, with these unwelcome facts, and whom they always accuse, in their own thought, at least, of hostility or deception. Such a mind we conceive to have been that of General McClellan. Accordingly, we find him, in spite of the explicit refusal of the navy to aid in the reduction of Yorktown conveyed to him in General Barnard's letter, quietly ignoring the situation, and proceeding to the Peninsula as if the needed co-operation had been promised, and, finally, in his Report and Autobiography practically accusing Flag Officer Goldsborough of having deceived him, of having encouraged him to transport his army to the Peninsula by promises which he afterwards refused to perform,—an accusation for which, as we have seen, there is not a shadow of justification.

In connection with this subject, it is interesting to note what McClellan says touching his expectations of using the James River as a line of supply, after the *Merrimac* had made her appearance. He tells us in his Report<sup>1</sup> that “the appearance of the *Merrimac* off Old Point Comfort and the encounter with the United States squadron on the 8th of

<sup>1</sup> 5 W. R., 50, 51.

March threatened serious derangement of the plan for the Peninsula movement. But the engagement between the Monitor and the Merrimac on the 9th of March demonstrated so satisfactorily the power of the former, and the other naval preparations were so extensive and formidable, that the security of Fort Monroe as a base of operations was placed beyond a doubt, and *although the James River was closed to us*, the York River with its tributaries was still open as a line of water communication with the Fortress. The general plan, therefore, remained undisturbed, *although less promising in its details than when the James River was in our control.*"

Here is a distinct admission that when he determined on the movement to the Peninsula, McClellan knew that the James River would not be open to him. What, then, can we make of the following statement in the Autobiography? "This, then, was the situation in which I found myself on the evening of April 5: Flag Officer Goldsborough had informed me *that it was not in his power to control the navigation of the James River so as to enable me to use it as a line of supply, or to cross it, or even to cover my left flank*; nor could he, as he thought, furnish any vessels to attack the batteries of Yorktown. . . . I was thus deprived of the co-operation of the navy and left to my own resources."<sup>1</sup> And to a similar statement made in his Report he adds: "*All this was contrary to what had been previously stated to me.*"<sup>2</sup>

What can be said in explanation or excuse of such contradictory statements? One thing certainly may be said, and that is this: that McClellan's Own Story is assuredly not the narrative of a clear-headed, or careful, or candid writer. It is perfectly plain that in regard to the closing of the James River, as in regard to the inability of the navy to attack the forts at Yorktown, McClellan was abundantly informed long

<sup>1</sup> O. S., 264.

<sup>2</sup> 12 W. R., 8.

before he embarked for the Peninsula. He had definite information on both points. But to this information he gave little or no heed. Notwithstanding it, he determined to go. Careful as he usually was of his army, cautious as he certainly was as a rule in his operations, he was so bent on this his favorite project that he persisted in it even when he knew that the co-operation of the navy in the manner and to the extent desired could not be had. And he tells his story in such a way as to imply that the authorities of the navy had deceived him into going to the Peninsula by representing that they could keep the James River open and attack the forts, when in truth they could do neither, as they informed him soon after his arrival. He claims our sympathy for the failure of the navy to co-operate effectually with him. His imagination has so warped his mind that he cannot think of his plan except as being feasible; the facts, of which he was well aware before he attempted to put it in execution, are to his mind not so much facts as objections raised by hostile and jealous opponents or half-hearted supporters. Instead, therefore, of a manly, clear, and unhesitating acceptance of facts, as of things which it is absolutely impossible to evade or to ignore, we have first a period of self-deception in regard to them, followed by what seems very like a disingenuous attempt to fasten upon others the blame of failures for which his own improvidence and obstinacy were solely responsible. Enough has been said to show how little trust is to be reposed in this narrative. And were our examination of the book limited to its value as throwing light on General McClellan's character and capacity, we would gladly drop the further consideration of his wrongs, and his claims for sympathy, and his insinuations against others, and proceed at once to the more welcome task of pointing out his services and his merits. But we cannot quite yet do this. His accusations against the members of Mr. Lincoln's cabinet are so fierce, so bitter, that they demand some investigation.

Stated in a few words, McClellan's main indictment against the administration consists in the charge that it deprived him of McDowell's corps when he moved to the Peninsula. Two out of the four divisions of which the corps was composed were, it is true, afterwards sent him, one following the other, but the remainder, though sometimes promised, never came. The corps was to have gone to the Peninsula with the others; but after McClellan had gone, it was found that, instead of the forty or fifty thousand men whom he had been ordered to leave for the garrison of Washington, he had left considerably less than twenty thousand men. We did hope, before we took up the Autobiography, to find in it some clear statement of McClellan's own notion of the way in which he had complied with the President's order to "leave Washington entirely secure," but we have been disappointed. The whole treatment of the subject is fragmentary and inconclusive. But that is not all. McClellan writes as if the whole subject of the numbers and disposition of the troops to be left for the defence of Washington had been put in his control, to be decided according to his best judgment, and he says that the force which he left was, "under the circumstances of the case"<sup>1</sup> sufficient, and that "the quality of the troops [they were mostly raw regiments] was amply good for the purposes in view." The truth was that the subject was no longer under McClellan's control; it had been referred, by the President's orders, to the decision of the commander of the army and of his corps commanders, and had been passed upon. A majority of the corps commanders had insisted on a full garrison for the forts on the right bank of the Potomac, and that those on the other bank should be occupied, and that there should be, besides, a covering force of twenty-five thousand men in front of the Virginia line. To this decision McClellan himself had assented. Now, Banks having been called off into the Valley with a force of

<sup>1</sup> O. S., 241.

thirty-five thousand men by the appearance of Stonewall Jackson, it was no longer possible to furnish the required number for the defence of Washington, and still carry the four corps to the Peninsula. There were not men enough. Nevertheless, the defence of Washington was the principal thing, in all McClellan's orders. It was only "the remainder" of the army which he was authorized by the President to take to the Peninsula. McClellan was in the position of an executor whom the will directs to pay certain definite pecuniary legacies, and whom the will also constitutes the residuary legatee. What he is entitled to is, of course, only what is left after the legacies are paid. If, now, we conceive of such an executor framing in his own mind an idea that he was certain to get such or such a sum of money as residuary legatee under that will, and undertaking to cut down the pecuniary legacies, because, on settling up the estate, he finds he cannot pay them in full, and yet retain for himself the sum on which his imagination has become fixed, we may obtain a pretty accurate notion of the way in which General McClellan viewed his orders and performed his duties in the early spring of 1862.

Of all this there was probably a latent consciousness in McClellan's mind. Accordingly, we do not find him carefully arranging with the authorities as to the troops that were to be left in and about Washington, in compliance with the instructions of the President. On the contrary, he does not deign to give them any information on the subject until he is on board the steamer and ready to start for the Peninsula. Then, and then only, does he tell the Secretary of War what dispositions he has made. He unquestionably expected that these dispositions would be accepted, or at any rate would not be very carefully scrutinized until after he should have embarked his army, and that then a speedy and brilliant success in the field would forestall criticism. But he reckoned without his host. From the time the idea of

removing the army entered his head he had entirely misconceived the nature of the objections to his plan entertained by the President and his advisers. These objections were fundamental, and they were sound. They were not aimed at McClellan personally, as he chose to imagine. They were founded on a just sense of the extreme importance to the country of preserving Washington; and on an intelligent and rational aversion to see the army, of which so great hopes were entertained, transported to a region where its only means of communication with its sources of supply must necessarily be by sea, the control of which by the United States navy was, since the appearance of the *Merrimac*, by no means an assured thing. But of the weight to which these considerations were rightfully entitled McClellan took no account whatever. To his mind objections to any plan of his could only spring from ignorance or malevolence.

Here we pause a moment to direct attention to one of McClellan's most marked deficiencies. He seems, from the beginning to the end of his military career, to have been well-nigh incapable of dealing with the civil authorities in any reasonable fashion. Their lack of acquaintance with the art of war, their impatience at the delay which the imperfect state of organization and drill of his army and the condition of the roads in a Virginia winter rendered necessary, — for all which he, as a man of the world, ought to have been prepared, and ought to have been ready and cheerfully willing to meet and put up with, if he could not succeed in overcoming them by argument and instruction, — he mistook either for fatuous stupidity or for malicious obstructiveness. Hence, to all suggestions or remonstrances he replied with resentment mingled with contempt. Never did a man so wilfully and insanely throw away his chances of success. Had he been a competent man of affairs, he would have known that no conjectural advantages presented by the Peninsular route over the overland route could possibly make

up for losing the confidence of the administration. Had it not been for his incredible conceit, he would have found in the President and his cabinet men who, however unfamiliar they might be with the learning pertaining to the profession of arms, were yet clear-headed, sensible, patriotic men, who would gladly have learned from him what they needed to know, and would have steadily stood by him in defeat or victory. But McClellan was so eaten up with egotism that he despised all criticism and hated all semblance of opposition; he was, moreover, so blind to the real truth of the situation that he thought that he could, by putting off all explanations until the army had gone, escape the mortification of having to renounce his favorite plan.

Here, however, he was mistaken. Instead of changing their views about the indispensableness of maintaining a large force in and about Washington, the administration, on learning from Wadsworth of the paltry array on which the capital must now depend for protection, detained McDowell's corps. And although one may think that, all things considered, it would have been wiser to have overlooked McClellan's disregard of his positive instructions, and allowed McDowell to go to him, yet it is really too clear for argument that McClellan himself had no ground of complaint. He had disobeyed his orders, and for the predicament in which he now found himself he had only himself to blame.

It does not require an exceptional insight into human nature to guess the state of McClellan's mind and feelings at this juncture. Of course, it needs not to be said, he took no part of the responsibility to himself. In his mind, Mr. Lincoln had promised to him the four corps, whatever might happen to Washington; the navy had agreed to keep open the James River and to attack the batteries of Yorktown and Gloucester, whatever the *Merrimac* might undertake to do; and here he was, without any fault of his own, boxed up,



so to speak, on a little tongue of exceedingly marshy land, surrounded on three sides by the sea and the rivers, with a very powerful adversary, very strongly entrenched, in front, and he unable, for want of the expected co-operation of McDowell's corps and the navy, to turn the enemy's positions and advance towards his goal. He thus writes to his wife (April 6th): "While listening this P. M. to the sound of the guns, I received an order detaching McDowell's corps from my command. It is the most infamous thing that history has recorded." (April 8th.) "I have raised an awful row about McDowell's corps. The President very coolly telegraphed me yesterday that he thought I had better break the enemy's lines at once! I was much tempted to reply that he had better come and do it himself."<sup>1</sup> (April 11th.) "Don't worry about the wretches [the administration]; they have done nearly their worst, and can't do much more. I am sure that I will win in the end, in spite of all their rascality. History will present a sad record of these traitors who are willing to sacrifice the country and its army for personal spite and personal aims."<sup>2</sup> (April 21st.) "Had a letter yesterday from Francis B. Cutting, of New York, hoping that I would not allow these treacherous hounds to drive me from my path."<sup>3</sup> (May 3d.) "I feel that the fate of a nation depends upon me, and I feel that I have not one single friend at the seat of government."<sup>4</sup>

In this unhealthy frame of mind McClellan seems to have remained all through the Peninsular campaign. Sometimes his mood is the heroic one, as where he writes to the President on May 21: "I believe that there is a great struggle before this army, but I am neither dismayed nor discouraged;"<sup>5</sup> or closes his gratuitous letter of advice, on July 7, to Mr. Lincoln, on the question of slavery, by the impressive words, "I may be on the brink of eternity, and as I hope for forgiveness from my Maker, I have written this letter

<sup>1</sup> O. S., 308.    <sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, 310.    <sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, 313.    <sup>4</sup> *Ib.*, 317.    <sup>5</sup> 12 W. R., 29.

with sincerity towards you and from love for my country.”<sup>1</sup> Sometimes his resentment for his supposed injuries goes beyond all bounds, as where he writes, on June 28, to Stanton: “If I save this army now, I tell you plainly that I owe no thanks to you, or to any other persons in Washington. You have done your best to sacrifice this army.”<sup>2</sup> So elsewhere, he tells his wife that he fears that “those people” “have done all that cowardice and folly can do to ruin our poor country.”<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, he never loses sight of his own importance. On July 18, he writes this to his wife: “If they supersede me in the command of the Army of the Potomac, I will resign my commission at once. . . . I owe no gratitude to any but my own soldiers here; none to the government *or to the country. I have done my best for the country; I expect nothing in return; they are my debtors, not I theirs.*”<sup>4</sup> So, again: “I have had enough of earthly honors and place. I believe I can give up all and retire to privacy once more, a better man than when we gave up our dear little home, with wild ideas of serving the country. *I feel that I have paid her all that I owe her.* I am sick and weary of this business. I am tired of serving fools. *God help my country! He alone can save it.*”<sup>5</sup>

This from the pen of a man thirty-six years old, who had commanded an army just one year. With such inordinate ideas of his own importance, and such incredible contempt for and animosity towards the men who composed the administration, did McClellan close his first campaign. From first to last, from the day when he set his foot in the mud before Yorktown to the day when he left Harrison’s Landing, we look in vain for any evidence of that calm, resolute, cheerful courage, which, if a man possess not, the army is not the career for him. As for his wretched talk about his having

<sup>1</sup> 12 W. R., 74.<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, 61.<sup>3</sup> O. S., 449.<sup>4</sup> *Ib.*, 450-451.<sup>5</sup> *Ib.*, 453.

overpaid his debt to his country, we cannot trust ourselves to speak of it at all. To take such an attitude as this, shows a man's views of duty to be fundamentally unsound.

Observe, again, the extraordinary tone which he assumed in writing to Mr. Stanton in regard to the proposed co-operation of McDowell's force. He had gathered, from some expressions in the despatches sent to him, that McDowell was to hold an independent command even after the junction of his corps with the Army of the Potomac. Such an arrangement was extremely distasteful to McClellan, and he was certainly quite right in thinking that it would work badly. But surely nothing can justify his sending to the secretary such an *ultimatum* as this: "If I cannot fully control all his troops, I want none of them, but would prefer to fight the battle with what I have, and let others be responsible for the results."<sup>1</sup> This is to make a mere personal matter of the whole business. However unfortunate may be the consequence of not sending McDowell to join the main army, McClellan says he prefers that course rather than that he should not "fully control" all McDowell's troops, if they do come. Nothing could show more clearly the state of moral confusion into which McClellan's mind had fallen. Any really clear-headed man sees at once that if McClellan thought that McDowell's joining him, even although retaining the separate command of his troops, was likely to be of benefit to the cause, it was McClellan's plain duty to urge that McDowell should be sent. He might remonstrate, and he ought to remonstrate, against McDowell's retaining any such separate command, as an arrangement certain to interfere more or less with the success of the operations; but unless he was of opinion that it would do more harm than good for a distinct corps, under its own independent commander, to re-enforce the Army of the Potomac, he had no right to say, as he did, that in such a case he would rather McDowell should not come.

<sup>1</sup> O. S., 389, and 12 W. R., 48.

Perhaps the most extraordinary instance of the peculiar working of McClellan's mind is his letter of advice to Mr. Lincoln, written from Harrison's Landing on the 7th of July, only a very few days after the close of the Seven Days' battles. On the 20th of June, while he was yet on the Chickahominy, McClellan had asked permission to lay before the President his "views as to the present state of military affairs throughout the whole country."<sup>1</sup> To this request, which no doubt struck the President as a rather remarkable one, Mr. Lincoln replied, *more suo*, that, "if it would not divert too much of " his (McClellan's) "time and attention from the army under " his "immediate command," he would be glad to have the views laid before him.<sup>2</sup> Taking this permission in its widest sense, McClellan wrote his famous letter from Harrison's Landing.<sup>3</sup>

No description can do justice to this performance. Here is a man, with no special means of knowledge, with no political experience, undertaking gravely to urge the Government "to determine upon a civil and military policy covering the whole ground of our national trouble." This policy he proceeds to lay down and define. It is, we need hardly say, a strictly conservative policy. The only important part of the letter is that opposing in the strongest terms the "forcible abolition of slavery." Unless the Government take the right ground on this subject, "the effort to obtain the requisite forces will be almost hopeless. A declaration of radical views, especially upon slavery, would rapidly disintegrate our present armies." The importance which McClellan attached to these opinions, which were in much less than a year to be proved utterly and preposterously unsound, is shown by the high-strung tone of this epistle. He commences with representing the rebel army in the front, "with the purpose of overwhelming us by attacking our positions, or reducing us by blocking our river communications." It is evidently a

<sup>1</sup> 12 W. R., 48.<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, 73; O. S., 487.

case of the lambs among the wolves, in McClellan's eyes. Gordon in Khartoum could not have been much more exposed to destruction. He closes by saying that he may himself be "on the brink of eternity," and that he has written with sincerity towards the President and love for his country.

Now we are perfectly willing to concede to Mr. Prime that this was not a political document. It may very likely not have been intended for political effect. But it certainly shows a man whose mind is heated and excited to an unnatural degree by dwelling on matters which are none of his business. Who was General McClellan that he should volunteer his advice to the President of the United States? Would even he, with all his egotism, have ventured on such a step as this on the 7th of July, 1861? What had happened during the year to make him a political oracle? Another thing is shown with painful distinctness, — the very superficial knowledge which McClellan had of the motives and the intentions of the masses of the Northern people, in whose minds the preservation or the destruction of slavery was always, as it was in the mind of Mr. Lincoln himself, a secondary question, which they were quite willing to leave to the decision of the constituted authorities of the country. Whether the President ought to have retained at the head of the army an officer who had thus notified him that, in the event of a certain attitude being taken by the Government on the slavery question, his army would probably be "disintegrated," is a question on which much might be said. All we need to remark here is, that there have been Presidents of the United States to whom it would not have been wise to write such a letter as this.

We have seen that McClellan insisted on going to the Peninsula, although the appearance and exploits of the Merrimac had closed the James River. But on the 12th of May, a few days only after the evacuation of Yorktown, the Merrimac was destroyed by the Confederates themselves, and

the James was open as far as Drury's Bluff. The question has often been asked why McClellan did not then use the James as his line of supply, instead of the York and Pamunkey. He tells us himself that this was what he would have done had McDowell's corps been sent to him by water, and he has no hesitation in expressing not only his decided preference for the James River route, but his opinion<sup>1</sup> that the failure of the campaign was due to his being obliged to take up a position on both sides of the Chickahominy, with his line of supply from the White House, on the Pamunkey, very imperfectly covered. He tells us that his adoption of the York and Pamunkey line instead of the James River line was due to the order of the 18th of May, in which he was informed that McDowell was to move towards Richmond to join him. And it may well be conceded that until McDowell was ordered off to the Shenandoah Valley to intercept Jackson, the order of the 18th did require McClellan's army to be on the Chickahominy. But on May 24 he is told that McDowell's movement is suspended, and he admits that he could not expect McDowell to join him "in time to participate in immediate operations in front of Richmond."<sup>2</sup> Why, then, it may pertinently be asked, did he not at once cross the Peninsula and establish his base on the James River? As yet, he had not entangled his army in the swamps of the Chickahominy. It was then a week before the battle of Fair Oaks. On the James his supplies would be furnished more easily, and his access to the neighborhood of Richmond would be unobstructed by swamps or rivers. Then there was the opportunity of crossing the James and seizing Petersburg, which he says himself he was sure he could have done.<sup>3</sup>

Finally, the enemy were known to be divided; Jackson was in the Valley. That the James River was the "true line of operations" McClellan says he was always of opinion. Why, then, did he not adopt it in the last week in May?

<sup>1</sup> O. S., 346.<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, 351.<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, 343.

The reason he gives us is that the order of May 18 for the co-operation of McDowell was only suspended, not revoked, and that therefore he could not abandon the northern approach and his communications with West Point.<sup>1</sup> We cannot accept this reason as the true one. After the despatch of the 24th of May, in which McClellan was informed that McDowell was ordered away in chase of Jackson, had been received, it seems to us that McClellan was free to adopt the line of the James, if he saw fit so to do. At any rate, it is very certain that had he desired to do so, and been in doubt as to the wishes of the Government, he might have asked the question whether the order of the 18th was to be considered as in any sense obligatory, now that McDowell had been sent off. But he never asked the question. Had he really seen at the time the weakness of his position athwart the Chickahominy and the superior advantages of operating from a base on the James, as he would now have us believe that he then did, he would have gone to the James the moment he heard that McDowell's promised co-operation had been indefinitely suspended. At the least, he would have applied for leave to do so. He did neither. And with his usual unwillingness to accept any blame for his own conduct, he most unfairly lays upon the Secretary of War the entire responsibility of retaining the army on the Chickahominy from the 18th of May till the 28th of June.<sup>2</sup>

We have said all that we care to say regarding McClellan's claim, or assumption, rather, that no one but himself could have led the army after the close of the unfortunate campaign of General Pope. We have read with care his account of the battle of Antietam. There is nothing to be learned from it. He does not explain to our comprehension why the battle was not fought the day before. His troops were all up; that is all, or nearly all, of those who fought on the 17th. He does not discuss the question of the relative num-

<sup>1</sup> O. S., 364.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, 481.

bers of the armies in the battle, but he does say that we were largely outnumbered, which we now know was not the case. He tells us why he did not renew the battle on the 18th in language very characteristic of the man: "I am aware of the fact that, under ordinary circumstances, a general is expected to risk a battle if he has a reasonable prospect of success; but at this critical juncture I should have had a narrow view of the condition of the country, had I been willing to hazard another battle with less than an absolute assurance of success. At that moment, — Virginia lost, Washington menaced, Maryland invaded, — the national cause could afford no risks of defeat. One battle lost, and almost all would have been lost. Lee's army might then have marched as it pleased, on Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia, or New York. It could have levied its supplies from a fertile and undevastated country; extorted tribute from wealthy and populous cities; and nowhere east of the Alleghanies was there another organized force able to arrest its march."<sup>1</sup> In thus piling Pelion upon Ossa, McClellan has no rival among military writers.

His letters during the campaign are certainly among the curiosities of military literature. The day after the action at South Mountain, he says: —

"September 15, Monday, 9.30 A. M. Just sent you a telegram informing you that we yesterday gained a glorious and complete victory; every moment adds to its importance. I am pushing everything after them with the greatest rapidity, and expect to gain great results. I thank God most humbly for His great mercy. How glad I am for my country that it is delivered from immediate peril! . . . If I can believe one-tenth of what is reported, *God has seldom given an army a greater victory than this.*"<sup>2</sup>

South Mountain was unquestionably a brilliant affair and a complete success, but there have been greater victories even

<sup>1</sup> O. S., 618.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, 612.



than South Mountain. The next day he has "no doubt delivered Pennsylvania and Maryland." The day after Antietam he writes, "Those in whose judgment I rely tell me that I fought the battle splendidly and that it was a masterpiece of art."<sup>1</sup> On the 20th he writes, "Our victory was complete, and the disorganized rebel army has rapidly returned to Virginia, its dreams of 'invading Pennsylvania' dissipated forever. I feel some little pride in having, with a beaten and demoralized army, defeated Lee so utterly and saved the North so completely. Well, one of these days history will, I trust, do me justice in deciding that it was not my fault that the campaign of the Peninsula was not successful. . . . Since I left Washington, Stanton has again asserted that *I*, not Pope, lost the battle of Manassas No. 2! . . . I am tired of fighting against such disadvantages, and feel that it is now time for the country to come to my help and remove these difficulties from my path. If my countrymen will not open their eyes and assist themselves they must pardon me if I decline longer to pursue the thankless avocation of serving them." And again, "*I feel that I have done all that can be asked in twice saving the country.* If I continue in its service I have at least the right to demand a guarantee that I shall not be interfered with."<sup>2</sup> To the same effect on the 22d: "I have the satisfaction of knowing that God has, in His merey, a second time made me the instrument for saving the nation, and am content with the honor that has fallen to my lot. I have seen enough of public life. No motive of ambition can now retain me in the service. The only thing that can keep me there will be the conviction that my country needs my services and that circumstances make it necessary for me to render them. I am confident that the poison still rankles in the veins of my enemies at Washington, and that so long as they live it will remain there. . . . I have received no papers containing the news of the

<sup>1</sup> O. S., 612.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, 613, 614.

last battle, and do not know the effect it has produced on the Northern mind. I trust it has been a good one, and that I am re-established in the confidence of the best people of the nation.”<sup>1</sup>

All these letters show McClellan's mind to have been in anything but a healthy condition. They reveal to us a man exalted with an insufferable egotism, viewing things all out of their due proportion, cherishing the most bitter resentments, never dreaming of imputing to himself any blame whatsoever, in a state of hopeless moral confusion, and practising all sorts of deceptions on his own mind. For in the bottom of his soul General McClellan knew that Antietam was not “a masterpiece of art,” that the Army of the Potomac was not a “demoralized” army, and that Lee was not “utterly defeated,” still less “disorganized.” But he always, as we before remarked, lived to a great degree in a world of his own, created by his own imagination.

After the battle of Antietam, McClellan deemed it necessary or at least advisable, to refit and re-organize his army. He was very deficient in cavalry. The troops were short of clothing and of some other supplies. Hence he posted his army in the neighborhood of Harper's Ferry, and refused to follow the enemy into Virginia. Orders had no effect upon him whatever. He thought the army needed this rest and these supplies, and he now felt himself to be strong enough to have his own way, and to disregard the orders of the President, and the Secretary, and General Halleck. In his appreciation of the needs of the army he may have been right. Very likely he was. But we have never believed, and we do not believe now, that it was an honest difference of opinion about these questions, and the like, that induced the administration to remove General McClellan from the command of the army. It was, in our judgment, the impossibility of establishing with him any intelligible relations. His attitude was so heroic, so flighty, so unpractical, so senti-

<sup>1</sup> O. S., 614, 615.

mental, so insubordinate, that the authorities despaired of ever coming to any understanding with him. While Mr. Lincoln and his advisers took a cool and essentially correct view of the campaign of Antietam, regarding it as a moderate success over an enemy who had rashly exposed himself to destruction, and were anxiously expecting that some movement would be made before winter should set in, McClellan was apparently occupying himself, during the fine October weather, with riding over the field, and collecting information for the forthcoming report of his glorious victory. To all their urgent appeals McClellan turned a deaf ear. There is to be found in his despatches and letters at this period that mixture of resentment and contempt which we noticed before, and to this was now added a new ingredient, that certainly did not make the cup more palatable, — an inordinate pride at having saved the country from the incapables who directed its destinies, and from the sword of a preponderant foe. Had it been a mere question of shoes and horses, of days or of weeks, McClellan would never have been relieved after Antietam. But it was not. It was found impossible to get on with a man like McClellan, to tolerate his pretensions, to accept his versions of facts. As for there ever having been any obstructions thrown in his way, all we can say is that McClellan utterly fails to give rise to a suspicion on this point; that is, in our judgment. A more preposterous and unfounded theory, in our opinion, was never broached.

Many as were McClellan's faults, however, it was inexcusable to supplant him by Burnside. Everybody who was in any degree behind the scenes knew of the miserable failure which Burnside had made at Antietam. Why he should have been selected to command the army, except that he happened to be next in rank to McClellan, no one could imagine at the time, and no one has ever learned since. What would have happened if McClellan had been continued in command it is perhaps useless to conjecture.

General McClellan undoubtedly had as comprehensive and correct a notion of what an army should be, to be really a well-organized and efficient military force, as any of our generals, and possibly he may have led them all in this regard. As an organizer, also, he was unquestionably one of our first men, although in this department he was probably equalled by Buell and Thomas. Nor should we forget the immense change for the better in the Army of the Potomac wrought by Hooker, in the winter succeeding the bloody defeat of Fredericksburg. But McClellan surpassed all our officers, except, possibly, Thomas and Sheridan, in the power of creating confidence and enthusiasm among the soldiers. The curious thing about McClellan's hold on his men was that it was acquired before the army had taken the field, while it was yet in the lines before Washington. And equally remarkable is the fact that it was not shaken by defeat and disaster. This enthusiasm, too, was contagious. In the Antietam campaign it was observed to affect troops who had not before served under him. The truth was that McClellan really loved his men; he was a man of a good deal of genuine sentiment; the position he occupied as head of the army, gaining it, as he did, at one bound, — as it were by the decree of destiny, — powerfully affected his imagination, and from the first he accepted the *rôle* of the friend and protector of the soldiers, as well as that of the commander of the army. To officers who had risen from the command of regiments, or brigades, or even corps, little or nothing of this sort of thing was possible; they had been too near to the men. With most people, in fact, such a strong feeling could never have found a place in their minds, from sheer lack of sentiment. But no one can read McClellan's letters and doubt the existence of this affection on his part for his men, and his thorough appreciation and enjoyment of their attachment to and confidence in him. For the soldiers were not slow to recognize the fact that in McClellan they possessed a commander who

imported into the ordinary formalities of official and military duty a certain pride in them, in their achievements, and in their virtues, a real solicitude for them, and a warm interest in their welfare and comfort, not to be found in any of the other officers of the army. To this solicitude and this interest they responded with all their hearts, and a personal relation was unquestionably established very early between McClellan and his soldiers that is almost, if not quite, unique in the history of war. It was, of course, an element of strength on our side so long as McClellan commanded the army, although he never used it on the field of battle. With him, war, in all its processes, was a mere matter of calculation, into which it was only mischievous to allow sentiment of any kind to enter. He thoroughly enjoyed this relation to his army, — it was, in fact, the only thing he did enjoy during his military life, — but he never made any such use of it as Stonewall Jackson, for instance, did of the hold which he had on his men.

Of McClellan's relations to the President and the members of the cabinet we have already spoken. But we may say here that enough and more than enough is disclosed in the volume before us to account for McClellan's failure on purely personal grounds. It is, in our opinion, impossible for any one reading this book to believe that McClellan's political views had any perceptible influence on his fortunes. There is no need of lugging in any such hypothesis. There is sufficient in the plain and undisputed facts to explain everything to the comprehension of any one who has seen much of the world. McClellan's sudden exaltation was more than he could bear; he considered himself a great man, — the appointed saviour of his country. To the natural and to-be-expected ignorance of military facts and military reasons which he met in Washington, he opposed the pride and self-sufficiency of a specialist, and of a specialist who was, it must be confessed, uncommonly young for his years. There

was no one in the administration who could keep him within proper bounds. Lincoln's practical sense was embodied in the uncouth garb of rusticity, and all his wise considerateness and wholesome advice went for nothing. As for the others, their attitude received at McClellan's hands absolutely no toleration. He never even endeavored to put himself in their place, nor, probably, could he have done so, had he tried. Hence arose inevitably a state of mutual suspicion and hostility, which continued to the time of his removal. All through this period both sides made mistakes, and serious ones. But the blame for the original falling out must rest with the general who attempted to evade his orders, and then threw upon others the responsibility he ought manfully to have shouldered himself. Lastly, let it be remembered that McClellan, as it was, had his fair share of the favors of fortune. No thanks to him, to be sure, but the James River was opened to him a week after he had taken Yorktown. For all that appears, he might have used that admirable line of operations, and escaped the unwholesome swamps of the Chickahominy and the forced change of base. No orders from the Secretary of War obliged him to suffer the Fifth Corps to be overwhelmed by the main army of Lee at Gaines's Mill; and nothing in the world but his own slowness prevented his attacking Lee at Antietam the day before Jackson came up from Harper's Ferry. It is impossible to get up much sympathy for General McClellan. And we do not think that this book of his will raise him in the opinion of his countrymen.

GENERAL SHERMAN.

BY

JOHN C. ROPES.

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## GENERAL SHERMAN.

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PROBABLY no general in the Union army has been more honored and appreciated, at least in the Northern States, than General Sherman. His achievements in the war were perhaps, on the whole, more striking and brilliant than those performed by any other officer, Federal or Confederate. They were of a kind calculated powerfully to excite the imagination, and they were crowned by complete and dazzling success. Then he was a man of most marked and individual traits of character. He was bold in action and in speech. He possessed all the peculiarly American characteristics. He was not only enterprising, full of resources, aggressive, but he was all this in a way distinctively his own; he was the type of the American general in these respects. More than this, he took the public into his confidence to a degree that no other general ever thought of doing. Not that he sought popularity by any unfair methods, but that he could not help stating to the world his views and conclusions, proclaiming his likes and his dislikes, as he went along. And although he was always a very plain-spoken man, and his opinions frequently ran counter to the popular notions, his evident honesty and sincerity took wonderfully with the people. There has been nobody in our time like General Sherman.

It may be too soon properly to estimate his military abilities. We are perhaps too near to the war, too familiar with the actors themselves, and with the local and temporary tradition about their doings; we are perhaps too much interested in them to be able to be thoroughly impartial. Yet the

contemporary generation possesses certain manifest advantages for coming to a correct judgment of the men and affairs of its day which cannot, in the nature of things, be possessed by the generations that come after. The men of the time cannot easily be grossly deceived or greatly mistaken. They have not gained all their knowledge from books. When they do read about the events through which they have passed, they know something about the writers of the books and their qualifications, and something about the events themselves from sources independent of the books. Eye-witnesses and direct testimony count, and ought to count, for a good deal. Let us then try to state in a very brief way what we, in this generation, know and think of the great soldier who has so recently left us.

General Sherman was appointed to the Military Academy at West Point from the State of Ohio, in 1836, and graduated in 1840, sixth in his class. Although during the Mexican war he was employed in the expedition to California, and therefore missed the opportunities for distinction in the field which the campaigns of Scott and Taylor so liberally afforded, and although he subsequently left the service, his appointment in the regular army as Colonel of one of the new regiments of infantry, and also as Brigadier-General of Volunteers in May, 1861, shows how highly his abilities were rated by his contemporaries and superiors. After the first battle of Bull Run, where he commanded a brigade, he was sent to Kentucky to serve under General Robert Anderson. The latter's health, however, soon failing him, Sherman assumed command of the Department of the Cumberland. General Sherman's connection with the Army of the Cumberland did not long continue, for, superseded at his own request by General Buell, he was transferred to General Halleck's Department of the Mississippi. Here began his connection with the troops which were afterwards organized into the Army of the Tennessee. The history of these two famous

commands is virtually the history of the war in the Mississippi Valley. Grant, Sherman and McPherson are the heroes of the Army of the Tennessee; Buell, Rosecrans and Thomas of the Army of the Cumberland.

Halleck's forces opened the campaign of 1862 with a brilliant stroke. The capture of Forts Henry and Donelson by the troops under Grant and the fleet under Foote, in February, caused the immediate fall of Nashville and the evacuation by the enemy of the greater part of the States of Kentucky and Tennessee. It was determined to push forward on the line of the Tennessee River as large a force as could be collected. Grant, with the confidence born of his recent victory, established his army at Pittsburg Landing, or Shiloh, on the western side of the river, having his headquarters at Savannah, some eight miles further down the river,—that is, to the northward,—and on the opposite or eastern bank. Sherman commanded a division in this army. Buell, now under Halleck's orders, had been directed to march with all his disposable forces from Nashville to Savannah, thence to be transferred to Pittsburg Landing, from which point the whole command was to advance southwestwardly to Corinth, a town on the great railroad which, running from west to east, connected Memphis with Chattanooga, intersecting the railroad from Mobile to the Ohio River, and constituted one of the most important avenues of communication for the enemy in that region. It was supposed at the time that the Confederate troops had been thoroughly discouraged by their recent heavy losses in men, material and territory, and that we should have no serious difficulty in attaining our objective point, and thus opening the way for further operations. Everybody knows what happened: how Albert Sidney Johnston and Beauregard saw their opportunity in the exposed situation of Grant's army; how they rapidly and secretly gathered their forces together; how they were delayed by bad weather and fright-

ful roads, but how, on Sunday morning, the 6th of April, they struck the unsuspecting army of Grant a terrible blow; how stubbornly and bravely Grant and his lieutenants resisted and held out, fighting to the last, Sherman especially distinguishing himself not only for gallantry, but for readiness and skill in making his dispositions; how, nevertheless, they were pressed back in disorder; how at the close of the day the advance guard of Buell's army arrived just in time to check the last assaults of the exhausted Confederates; and how the battle was renewed the next day, and resulted in a great success for the Union arms.

Grant and Sherman have always persistently maintained that they were not surprised at Shiloh; but the world has never been able to take their statements seriously. Grant wrote to Halleck, the day before the battle, that he had scarcely the faintest idea of a general attack being made upon him. Sherman, the same day, wrote from Pittsburg Landing to Grant at Savannah that he did not apprehend anything like an attack upon his position. They unquestionably said what they thought at the time. The battle began at half past five o'clock in the morning. Grant did not reach the field till after nine. It stands to reason that such tardiness on the part of an army commander to arrive on the field of battle is susceptible of no more natural, and assuredly of no more honorable explanation than that he was expecting no battle to occur. Surprised, however, as was the Federal commander, he was not thrown off his balance. Never did Grant display to better advantage the firmness and steadfast courage which he possessed in so unusual a degree. Sherman's conduct, too, after the fighting began, was above all praise. His division was made up of troops perfectly new, who had never been under fire; but he handled them with such skill and ability that he made a reputation on that disastrous field.

As a subordinate commander, Sherman had the rare good

fortune of serving under a man whom he greatly admired and in whom he fully trusted; and General Grant returned the confidence which his lieutenant reposed in him. The perfect understanding between these two eminent men was not only one of the most interesting facts of the war, but it was productive of great good to the public service. It showed in many ways how wise it is for the superior, whenever it is possible to do so, to rely confidently on the subordinate; to refrain from undertaking to regulate his decisions as to matters under his own eye; not to attempt to prescribe the details of his action or to criticise his dispositions in the spirit of a taskmaster. Cordial co-operation in their work was the fruit of this unique relation between Sherman and Grant. While it cannot be said that this part of Sherman's life was marked by any brilliant successes in the field, his reputation with the army, with Grant, his immediate superior, and with Halleck, the General-in-Chief at Washington, steadily increased. He was seen to be a careful, energetic and trustworthy corps commander. But that was all. The army that reduced Vicksburg had no great battles to fight like those of Stone River and Chickamauga. The Vicksburg campaign was won by superior strategy. Therefore Sherman, when summoned by Grant to join him at Chattanooga, in October, 1863, after the latter had been assigned to the command of all the forces in the West, brought with him no such reputation as a brilliant fighter as Longstreet bore when he came to add his veteran Virginians to the army of Bragg.

On the other hand, Thomas, who had succeeded Rosecrans in command of the Army of the Cumberland, had just won great distinction by his extremely able and courageous conduct on the bloody field of Chickamauga, where he stopped the rout, rallied the fugitives, and maintained his position with entire and splendid success against the desperate assaults of the Confederates, flushed with their victory over the right of the line led by Rosecrans in person. There

was no denying that Thomas had proved himself not only equal to the situation, but superior to it. It would have been only just to have entrusted to him the supreme conduct of affairs in that region, and to have re-enforced him with all the troops that were available. But General Grant's great success at Vicksburg induced the government to give to him the chief command in the Mississippi Valley; and he at once ordered Sherman to march at the head of the Army of the Tennessee to the assistance of the Army of the Cumberland. Moreover, Grant determined to give to Sherman the principal part in the forthcoming battle, by which he expected to raise the siege of Chattanooga. Sherman, with five divisions, was to attack the enemy's right and completely turn his position; when this should have been done, Thomas was to attack the centre; Hooker, meanwhile, was to operate against his extreme left. Owing, however, to the unexpectedly difficult nature of the ground, Sherman failed to make any impression. To create a diversion for him, Grant ordered Thomas's command, consisting of four divisions, to carry the rifle-pits at the foot of the enemy's position. In an incredibly short time his troops had executed this task. But they could not stay in the works they had won. Yet they had no orders to go forward. They took the matter into their own hands. Without orders, and to the amazement of the commanding general, they clambered up the slopes of Missionary Ridge, and after a brief and brilliant fight they stood victorious on its summit.

It must be confessed that in their accounts of this great battle, as of Shiloh, Grant and Sherman have allowed their personal feelings to color, if not to distort, the narrative. Sherman has stated that the object of the attacks made upon the flanks of Bragg's position by General Hooker and himself "was to disturb him [Bragg] to such an extent that he would naturally detach from his centre as against us, so that Thomas's army could break through his centre." And

Grant, in his Memoirs, obviously intends to convey the impression that this was his plan of battle, and that the battle was fought and won as he had planned it. Yet the despatches and reports prove conclusively that the movement which Grant ordered was intended merely to relieve Sherman by distracting the enemy's attention; and that it was limited to the capture of the rifle-pits at the foot of the Ridge. General Grant's original orders to both Sherman and Thomas show that he intended a joint attack to be made by their united commands, when Sherman should have carried the north end of the Ridge. Instead of this, Sherman failed, owing to unforeseen difficulties, to accomplish his part of the programme. Grant, thinking him hard pressed, ordered an advance to carry the rifle-pits at the foot of the Ridge, in order to relieve the pressure on him; this diversion was all that was intended by this move. But the gallantry of the troops and the fortune of war turned this incidental operation into a brilliant success, which resembled in its execution and consequences the famous assault on the heights of Pratzen which decided the battle of Austerlitz. The glory of this unexpected victory belongs mainly to the troops themselves, and specially to the men of Sheridan's and Wood's divisions, and cannot properly be claimed by either Grant or his lieutenants.

To Sherman, however, as Grant's favorite officer, was given the chief command in the West, when, in the spring of 1864, the new Lieutenant-General was placed in control of all the armies of the United States. In May of that year a new career opened for General Sherman, that of commander of a large army, and the famous Atlanta campaign began. At the same time, General Grant, accompanying the Army of the Potomac, under General Meade, crossed the Rapidan and advanced against General Lee. The objects of both commanders were similar. They were laid down clearly by Grant himself. On the 4th of April he wrote to Sherman:

“You I propose to move against Johnston’s army, to break it up and to get into the interior of the enemy’s country as far as you can, inflicting all the damage you can against their war resources.”<sup>1</sup> To the same effect, substantially, he wrote to Meade on the 9th: “Lee’s army will be your objective point. Wherever Lee goes, there you will go also.”<sup>2</sup> That Sherman clearly understood his chief’s intention is certain. He says in his Memoirs: “Neither Atlanta, nor Augusta, nor Savannah, was the objective, but the ‘army of Jos. Johnston’ [*sic*], go where it might.”<sup>3</sup>

There can be no doubt as to the soundness of General Grant’s view. If the two armies of Lee and Johnston could be destroyed, there would be an end of the war. If these armies should not be destroyed, the occupation of the Southern cities would avail little. New York and Philadelphia, Charleston and Savannah, were held by the British in the war of the Revolution; but so long as Washington and Greene were at the head of armies in New Jersey and the Carolinas the rebellion was not put down. Grant’s idea of the true objects to be accomplished by himself and Sherman was unquestionably sound and clearly stated. It is, therefore, rather remarkable that neither he nor Sherman succeeded, in the campaigns which they began in May, 1864, in accomplishing these objects. At the close of that year the main army of Lee lay in its lines in front of Petersburg and Richmond; only that part of Lee’s army which he had sent into the Shenandoah Valley had been destroyed. This certainly had been effected by Sheridan. Sherman, also, reached, occupied, demolished, and left Atlanta without destroying the army of Johnston and Hood. That task he finally abandoned to Thomas, who executed it in the memorable and decisive victory of Nashville. Let us briefly examine Sherman’s movements.

Sherman undoubtedly started out with the intention of

<sup>1</sup> 59 W. R., 246.

<sup>2</sup> 60 W. R., 828.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Sherman’s Memoirs, 26.



fighting, and, if possible, overwhelming, Johnston's army. He had with him about a hundred thousand men, under Thomas, McPherson and Schofield, three very able commanders. His opponent, General Joseph E. Johnston, was, next to Lee, the best general in the Southern army. His army was probably about sixty thousand strong. It was well entrenched at Dalton. We cannot, of course, follow this most interesting campaign in detail. Sherman lost, at the very outset, the best and perhaps the only chance he had during the whole summer of inflicting a decisive defeat upon his antagonist. Had he followed Thomas's advice, had he marched immediately, with the great bulk of his army, through Snake Creek Gap and seized the railroad in Johnston's rear at Resaca, instead of sending McPherson through the Gap with a comparatively small force, he might have ended the campaign with a sudden and brilliant victory. But he missed this opportunity, and his wary and skilful opponent presented him with no other. Sherman was compelled to turn his adversary's positions and force him to fall back without ever being able to bring him to bay in a situation where the superior numbers of the Union army would tell. Sometimes, in his endeavor to find the weak places in the enemy's positions, Sherman lost more men than he need have lost; and it must be said that his assaults at Kenesaw Mountain did not do credit to his tactical judgment. In his desire to bring matters to a crisis, he failed to recognize that his orders could not be carried out, and that his losses would not only be severe, but fruitless. Nevertheless, on the whole, he husbanded his army. He cannot be charged with having adopted the wasteful policy of "attrition," which Grant tried during May and June, 1864, and which cost the Army of the Potomac so many thousands of valuable lives, with such meagre results. And in point of caring for stores, supplies, ammunition, and subsistence, Sherman was a marvellous provider. No one could march a large army through an unproductive country more successfully than he. But so long

as Johnston remained in command of the Confederate army, Sherman could not get at it. When Johnston was superseded by Hood, Sherman had indeed to repel the latter's fierce attacks upon him, but, from one cause or another, he could not or did not force Hood to a general battle; and when he had, by another turning movement, caused the evacuation of Atlanta, the Confederate army was still intact and still formidable.

General Sherman thus found himself in a very difficult position. He had, it is true, possession of Atlanta, which the public undoubtedly considered to have been the objective point of his campaign; certainly its capture effected a great change in the minds of the Northern people in respect to their expectation of final success in the war. But Sherman knew that the capture of Atlanta of itself signified little. He knew perfectly well that he had not set out from Dalton with the object of getting possession of Atlanta, but with the object of destroying the main Confederate army in the West; and he knew, also, that he had done practically nothing towards carrying out his intention. He recognized, in fact, that he was in most respects far less favorably situated for destroying that army than he had been on the 1st of May; for, difficult as he had found it to be to obtain supplies in his march to Atlanta,—drawing them, as he was obliged to do, from Nashville and Chattanooga,—he had yet successfully accomplished this task; he had carried his army as far south as Atlanta, and he had had a chance to strike the Confederate army in his front all the time. But now he knew he must stop. His line of communication was already dangerously long. He could not follow up Hood's army into the interior of the country, relying on his existing arrangements, and transport with him all the stores, equipment, and ammunition that, in a serious pursuit of such a powerful force as the Confederate army was, are necessarily required. Moreover, he had by no means as large an army as that with which he had moved upon Dalton at the outset of the campaign.

Nearly one third of his men and many of his best officers had to be employed in guarding the railroad, and in garrisoning the subsidiary depots of subsistence and ammunition. Diminished, then, as his active army was to two thirds its original size, and arrived as he was at the end of his line of supply, what was there for him to do?

For nearly a month after the fall of Atlanta, which took place on the 2d of September, 1864, the situation in Georgia was substantially as described above. But it would be a great mistake to suppose that General Sherman felt himself to be at the end of his resources. He applied to the problem before him a mind exceptionally active and ingenious, and full of enterprise and industry. He was constantly devising new plans by which the prestige which the Federal army had won in capturing Atlanta could be utilized, and by which, in some way, by combinations with other commands which were to operate either from the Gulf of Mexico or from the Atlantic Ocean, the initiative, with all its inestimable advantages, could be maintained. To read his correspondence at this period with Grant and Halleck is most interesting, albeit at times rather puzzling. He proposes plan after plan; and some of his suggestions strike the reader as wild enough. But they were merely suggestions; they did not in any way commit him to action. It is true that no man was ever more fertile in expedients than General Sherman; but then no man was ever more particular than he in arranging the details of a military operation. No general ever lived who realized more fully than General Sherman the importance of knowing just where every pound of beef and every ounce of ammunition was to come from; and it is quite safe to say that he had not the slightest intention of changing his base until he had settled all these and all other important details to his own complete satisfaction. Therefore, when we find him speaking of a movement to be made from Mobile, utilizing the Alabama and Chattahoochee rivers as lines of supply, or the capture of

Savannah by troops to be sent by Grant from Virginia, and then the establishment of a new base on the upper part of the Savannah River, we may admire the fertility of the mind which could find such ways of escape from an enforced inaction, and at the same time feel entire confidence that, before any important step should be taken, matters would be arranged with the utmost care and precaution, so far, at any rate, as General Sherman's own movements were concerned.

Nothing, however, came of these suggestions, for the very good reason that, considerably to Sherman's surprise, General Hood was the one to take the initiative. His cavalry, under two able leaders, Forrest and Wheeler, had during September been threatening the railroad from Atlanta to Chattanooga, and also the railroads running south from Nashville, and in some places cutting the line for a time; but in the last week of September Hood's main army broke camp and marched north. The most famous episode of this movement of Hood's was the resolute and successful defence made on October 5 by General Corse of our post at Allatoona Pass, — one of the most memorable occurrences in the whole war. But we cannot go into details here. Suffice it to say that Hood struck the railroad in several places, broke up the communication for a time, but finally drew off his army, towards the end of October, to Gadsden, in the northern part of Alabama, without a serious engagement. Sherman then re-established the railroad service to Atlanta, and, concentrating the greater part of his army at Gaylesville, Alabama, waited to see what his adversary, whose army was lying not many miles to the southwest, would do next.

Sherman had been convinced by this raid of Hood's that Atlanta was not permanently tenable, so long, at least, as the Confederate Army of the West remained substantially intact, nor was it worth the cost of holding it. What was the good of remaining at such an advanced post as Atlanta, where every mile of the only railway by which the army could be

supplied offered a temptation to an enemy's army substantially in good order and condition? For, unless he should cut loose from his base at Chattanooga and march south, giving up his hold on the railroad, or else should retreat to Tennessee, Sherman must remain at Atlanta, since the railroad communication could be extended no further. A large Federal Army stalemated at Atlanta, if we may use an expression borrowed from the chess-board, and whose long line of communications temptingly invited attack, was certainly a lame and impotent conclusion of the campaign so bravely and hopefully begun on the 4th of May. Some issue must be found from this unsatisfactory state of affairs.

The natural thing to do, and the thing which at this time General Sherman undoubtedly wanted to do, was to resume the original plan; that is, to make the destruction of the Confederate Army the sole object of the campaign. There is abundant evidence that when Hood's movements against the railroad forced Sherman not only to send Thomas to Chattanooga, but to go north himself with the bulk of the army, leaving only one corps at Atlanta, he greatly desired to bring Hood to battle. But Hood was too wary to accommodate him. He saw perfectly the great advantage to the Confederates in prolonging the existing state of things; to his mind nothing could well be more gratifying than to see the main Federal Army of the West flying from point to point on the Chattanooga and Atlanta railroad, — here repairing a burnt trestle, there rebuilding a blockhouse, here, again, relaying a few miles of railroad track; and all this time suffering occasional panics whenever Forrest's cavalry approached dangerously near the railroads south of Nashville. Hood kept well to the west of the Chattanooga and Atlanta railroad; and he knew that he could, in case Sherman should move against him, lead him a chase through a difficult country, across considerable rivers, and put him to great trouble to obtain his subsistence and forage. For, in moving against Hood's army

with the intention of engaging and in the hope of destroying it, Sherman could not afford to use the light equipment which sufficed for the unopposed march to the sea ; nor would it do to scatter his army in order to obtain provisions, as he then so freely did. If he was to make Hood's army his objective, he must arrange his dispositions accordingly ; he must carry with him abundance of artillery, of ammunition, of supplies of all sorts, and be prepared to fight battles. This Hood calculated Sherman did not wish to do, situated as he then was.

And in this calculation Hood was quite right. The Federal commander was indeed prepared, and in fact anxious, to move against Hood, if Hood should be so unwise as to cross the Tennessee River, on his northward march, within a short distance of Gaylesville, where Sherman's army lay. Not to operate against an army which should thus recklessly expose its communications would indeed be unpardonable. But Hood had no intention of committing such a blunder as this. He moved westward as far as Florence, Alabama, some hundred and fifty miles west of Chattanooga, and there concentrated his troops and supplies. Here he was on the 1st of November. Here he and Beauregard, who was advising with him, had fixed their base of operations for their proposed advance on Nashville. Now, for Sherman to march across the country from Gaylesville towards Florence with a large army was not only not an easy task, but it involved the abandonment — so Sherman thought — of Atlanta, and an entire rearrangement of bases and lines of supply. On the other hand, to retire the army to Tennessee, and there repel an invasion of the enemy, seemed like a confession of defeat, or at least of having entirely failed to carry out the true objects of the spring campaign, — a thing, as Sherman thought, certainly to be avoided, if possible. There remained another course, — and it was one which fascinated the Federal commander alike by its originality and its startling audacity, — and that was to re-enforce Thomas so as to make him equal

to the task of repelling the invasion, if one should be undertaken, while the main army, under Sherman in person, should march across the State of Georgia to Savannah and the sea.

Bearing now in mind the great attraction which this project possessed for General Sherman, as appears from his correspondence with the Washington authorities, we must not be surprised to find in Sherman's letters to Grant and Halleck evidences of an unwillingness on his part to look the matter in all its bearings squarely in the face, and of a strong desire to dwell only on the more favorable conditions of the problem, and especially to present the scheme so that only its most attractive features should be displayed. The idea of a march to the sea, which should demonstrate the hollowness of the Confederacy, which should amaze and delight the world by its novelty and its audacity, and which should yet involve no risk to the 60,000 picked veterans who were to perform the feat, took manifest possession of General Sherman's mind. But Grant, whose imagination, if he ever had any, was not excited beyond bounds even by this brilliant proposal of his favorite lieutenant, urged, in a letter dated November 1, upon Sherman that he had better "entirely settle" Hood before starting on his proposed campaign; that, "with Hood's army destroyed," he could go where he pleased "with impunity." "If you can see the chance for destroying Hood's army, attend to that first, and make your other move secondary."<sup>1</sup>

This was unquestionably sound advice; the destruction of Hood's army would, as Grant said, make everything possible in the West. The Confederacy had no other army but Lee's east of the Mississippi; and if Hood's army should be broken up, the Gulf and the Southern Atlantic States must fall before the forces of the Union. But Sherman was not to be dissuaded from his project. He convinced himself, and so represented to Grant and Halleck, that Thomas was not only

<sup>1</sup> 79 W. R., 576.

able to "hold the line of the Tennessee" River, but would "very shortly be able to assume the offensive,"<sup>1</sup>— even talking about ordering him to move on Selma, Alabama, before long.<sup>2</sup> How far these representations were from giving Grant a correct notion of the actual state of things appears from the fact that it was not until November 30, the day of the battle of Franklin, that Thomas could be said to have had at Nashville a force large enough to be called an army. On that day, General A. J. Smith's corps of 12,000 men arrived there from Missouri; and on the next day, Schofield, whose little army had been obliged to fall back from the Tennessee River to Franklin, where it had desperately and successfully defended itself against the determined onslaught of Hood, made good his retreat to the same place.

General Sherman succeeded, however, in convincing Grant, who wrote to him on November 2: "With the force you have left with Thomas, he must be able to take care of Hood and destroy him. . . . I say, then, go as you propose."<sup>3</sup> Sherman thus obtained the assent of his superior to his startling project of leaving to Thomas the accomplishment of the task which had originally been assigned to Sherman himself, — the destruction of the main Confederate army in the West. Grant at last yielded to Sherman's persistent representations, and consented to assume that this task, for which in the spring the whole Federal army of the West was deemed no more than adequate, might in the fall safely be entrusted to a congeries of commands, then widely separated, soon, to be sure, to be brought together, but which could not be properly called an army at all until its scattered parts should be assembled. And this, too, when there was no pretence of any exigency demanding the presence of the greater part of the Federal Army of the West on the Atlantic seaboard. In view of such a decision as this, it is impossible not to say that those who made it trusted largely in their good luck. To

<sup>1</sup> 79 W. R., 660.<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, 740.<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, 594.



transport the greater part of the Federal Army of the West far from the theatre of war, while the Confederate army in that region was still a large, well-organized, well-commanded and formidable force, was certainly a most amazing step to take. It turned out all right, indeed; but no one can read the story of Hood's invasion of Tennessee in November and December, 1864, without at times holding his breath. It seems almost as if the goddess known as the Fortune of War from time to time visibly interfered to hinder and derange the operations of Hood and his lieutenants, and to further the combinations and movements of Thomas and his subordinates. No one familiar with this campaign can honestly say that he thinks that such luck could fairly have been counted on by Grant and Sherman. It is a clear case where the maxim *Exitus acta probat* is applicable, if that maxim ever is applicable.

For his great march, however, Sherman, his mind now relieved by Grant's tardy assent from all anxiety about the situation in Tennessee, made his most careful preparations. Sixty-two thousand of the best troops in the army, well organized, well officered, every detail of equipment most carefully attended to, full of ardor, elation, enterprise and courage, began on the 15th of November, 1864, one of the most unexpected and startling military movements on record. They met no foe until they reached the sea. The North was electrified, the South dismayed. And while Sherman's army was besieging Savannah, Hood had made his invasion; had forced back Schofield from the Tennessee to the Harpeth; had furiously assaulted him at Franklin, only to be repelled with unheard-of loss; had pursued him to Nashville; had then sat down before that city as if on purpose to give the cool and resolute commander of the Union forces all the time he needed to equip and consolidate his heterogeneous command; and had, on December 15, succumbed utterly to the well-conceived and well-delivered blows of General

Thomas. The battle of Nashville, unlike nearly all our battles, well-nigh destroyed the beaten army.

Hence, when Savannah surrendered, the country was already in a state of exultation at Thomas's glorious and decisive victory; and men's minds, as always in such cases, welcomed with almost frantic excitement the novel sight of the other great Western general now arriving on the Atlantic coast. Savannah was presented by the victor as a Christmas present to President Lincoln; and, in view of the destruction of the Confederate Army of the West by Thomas, and the addition of this splendid Western army under Sherman to the Union forces east of the Alleghanies, it was evident to the dullest understanding that the end was rapidly drawing nigh. And in truth the "March to the Sea," as Sherman had calculated it would do, absorbed public attention to the exclusion of everything else. Its novelty and audacity, the ease with which it had been conducted, the demonstration which it afforded of the superior power of the North, filled the public mind with exultation and hope. The imagination of the people was captivated. Sherman became the hero of the day.

Yet the propriety of the withdrawal of this army from the seat of war in the West can be defended only by the event. To have imperilled the hold of the Union government on the States of Tennessee and Kentucky; to have exposed all the posts from Chattanooga to Nashville, to say nothing of Louisville, to assault and capture by the Confederate army under Hood; in short, to have left so much to chance when everything might so easily have been made secure, was to count unwarrantably upon the favors of fortune. No margin was left for accidents. It is not easy to see why 50,000 men would not have served Sherman's purpose as well as 62,000 men; and assuredly 12,000 good troops would have added greatly to Thomas's scanty resources, and contributed largely to insure the destruction of Hood's army,

which alone could give to the strategy which sanctioned the withdrawal of so many troops to the Atlantic coast the possibility of leading to useful results. It is true that Thomas's victory practically attained this end. In the march of his army through the Carolinas, Sherman had to encounter only the remnants of Hood's defeated and discouraged troops added to the insignificant garrisons of the Atlantic cities; and with these forces he was abundantly able to cope. But Thomas's success was really unprecedented. It could not fairly have been anticipated. And it would have been an entirely different matter for Sherman if Hood's whole army, or the greater part of it, had confronted him at the marshes and rivers over which his toilsome and difficult route lay.

Sherman used his advantages with the greatest skill. His hold on his army was perfect; there was nothing that the men would not do at his bidding. The labors of the march northward from Savannah were enormous, the weather was terrible, but everything was cheerfully borne. Sherman's masterly manœuvres deceived and confused his adversaries. He aimed to reach a new base, where he should find supplies and re-enforcements, at Goldsboro', North Carolina; he recalled the fate of Cornwallis, who, in the interior of North Carolina, was obliged to give battle to Greene, and, although remaining master of the field, was forced by his losses in men and ammunition to retire to Wilmington. Sherman turned off at Columbia to the northeast, though feigning with a part of his force to keep on moving north. Hence the enemy were unable to strike him until he was close upon Goldsboro'. At Averysboro' he had a brisk and successful engagement; at Bentonville the action was more severe, but we held our own at the end of the day. Once arrived at Goldsboro' the task was easy. Here Schofield, with the Twenty-third Corps, joined the army; and from Goldsboro' as a new base the march was resumed, until on

April 14, 1865, a flag of truce was received from General Johnston, opening negotiations for the surrender of the Confederate forces.

It would not be right to close a review of General Sherman's character and services without referring to his often-announced policy of devastation. It can hardly be doubted that a desire to inflict punishment on the people of the South for their course in breaking up the Union was a strong element in favor of his project of marching across the country. Thus, on October 9, 1864, he telegraphs to General Grant:—

“Until we can repopulate Georgia, it is useless to occupy it; but the utter destruction of its roads, houses, and people will cripple their military resources. . . . I can make the march, and make Georgia howl!”<sup>1</sup>

October 17, to General Schofield:—“I will make the interior of Georgia feel the weight of war.”<sup>2</sup>

October 19, to General Beckwith:—

“I propose to abandon Atlanta and the railroad back to Chattanooga, and sally forth to ruin Georgia and bring up on the seashore.”<sup>3</sup>

So, when he arrived before Savannah, he wrote to the Confederate General Hardee as follows:—

“Should I be forced to resort to assault, and the slower and surer process of starvation, I shall then feel justified in resorting to the harshest measures, and shall make little effort to restrain my army,—burning to avenge a national wrong they attach to Savannah and other large cities which have been so prominent in dragging our country into civil war.”<sup>4</sup>

To General Grant, December 18:—

“With Savannah in our possession at some future time, if not now, we can punish South Carolina as she deserves, and as thousands of people in Georgia hoped we would do. I do sincerely believe that the whole United States, North

<sup>1</sup> 79 W. R., 162.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, 335.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, 359.

<sup>4</sup> 92 W. R., 737.

and South, would rejoice to have this army turned loose on South Carolina to devastate that State, in the manner we have done in Georgia, and it would have a direct and immediate bearing on your campaign in Virginia.”<sup>1</sup>

To General Halleck, December 24 : —

“ I attach more importance to these deep incisions into the enemy’s country, because this war differs from European wars in this particular. We are not only fighting hostile armies, but a hostile people, and must make old and young, rich and poor, feel the hard hand of war, as well as their organized armies. I know that this recent movement of mine through Georgia has had a wonderful effect in this respect. . . . The truth is the whole army is burning with an insatiable desire to wreak vengeance upon South Carolina. I almost tremble at her fate, but feel that she deserves all that seems in store for her. . . . I look upon Columbia as quite as bad as Charleston, and I doubt if we shall spare the public buildings there, as we did at Milledgeville.”<sup>2</sup>

From the above citations, — and they might easily be multiplied, — it seems clear that General Sherman conceived that he was justified in causing loss and damage to private and public property as a punishment for political conduct. It can hardly be pretended that the devastation spoken of is that which follows naturally and inevitably in the wake of an invading army. If that is all that is referred to, then the language employed is a great deal too strong to convey the meaning of the writer. It is true that the orders issued to his army for its conduct on the great march are, though by no means strict, yet not in principle objectionable. Foraging was to be confined to regular foraging parties ; soldiers were not to enter houses or commit any trespass. Corps commanders only could destroy mills, houses, and like property ; and then solely in districts and neighborhoods where the inhabitants had burnt bridges, obstructed roads, or otherwise

<sup>1</sup> 92 W. R., 743.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, 799.

manifested hostility. It may well be believed, certainly, that there was much greater license exercised than was warranted by the terms of these orders. But granting that this was so, it was due in great measure to the unavoidable circumstance that the army had to live off the country; and acts of this nature do not tend to settle the question whether devastation for the sake of punishment was ordered or allowed by General Sherman. It seems to us that General Sherman, in the passages cited above, did enunciate in distinct terms the principle that the infliction of such punishment by a general commanding an army is within his rights; that is, that it is sanctioned by the laws of modern civilized warfare.

If we are correct in attributing this position to Sherman, we cannot lose the opportunity of pointing out that the authorities are against him. Military operations are not carried on for the purpose of inflicting punishment for political offences. The desolation and destruction inseparable from them are not the result of acts done for the purpose of producing suffering, but are to be considered as merely incidental to the military movements; and the object of military movements is to overcome armed resistance. The amount of such suffering cannot be unnecessarily increased without a violation of the humane rules of modern war. The true principle is stated with sufficient accuracy in Sherman's orders at the commencement of his great march. If he transgressed these rules, as it would appear from his own letters and despatches that he did, he cannot be defended. Whatever the Georgians and South Carolinians suffered by having to supply provisions, forage, fuel, horses, or military stores of any kind to Sherman's invading army, whether more or less in amount, was a mere incident of a state of war, for which neither General Sherman nor his army was to blame. But if Sherman purposely destroyed, or connived at the destruction of, property which was not needed for the supply of his army or of the enemy's army, he violated one of the fundamental canons of

modern warfare; and just so far as he directed or permitted this, he conducted war on obsolete and barbarous principles. As to the facts, they are not perfectly easy to ascertain. In his official report, Sherman estimated the entire damage done to the State of Georgia at \$100,000,000, of which only \$20,000,000 "inured to our advantage," the remainder being "simple waste and destruction."<sup>1</sup> Still, much of this may have been inevitable. We have no space here to review the evidence, and must content ourselves with stating the rule as we understand it.

We cannot, in this connection, avoid remarking that General Sherman was proved by the event to have been entirely mistaken in thinking that "to devastate" the State of South Carolina "would have a direct and immediate bearing on" Grant's "campaign in Virginia." This is clearly a case of seeking far afield for a reason for a thing which a man has made up his mind to do. As a matter of fact, General Lee remained in his lines at Petersburg and Richmond until the season was sufficiently advanced for Grant to commence operations; and it was not until the battle of Five Forks had been lost that Lee evacuated his works and began his disastrous retreat.

Much the same criticism may be passed upon General Sherman's statement, above cited, of the importance which he attached to "these deep incisions into the enemy's country," namely, that we were not only fighting hostile armies, but a hostile people, and must make everybody "feel the hard hand of war." There is a sort of *ad captandum* semblance of logic about this remark that no doubt made it popular at the time. But surely it needs but a moment's reflection to see that nothing is gained by adding anything to the task of the soldier, which is to defeat and destroy the hostile force. To infuriate needlessly a population already known to be unfriendly assuredly cannot make the soldier's task easier; on

<sup>1</sup> 92 W. R., 13.

the contrary, it must rather multiply his difficulties, and tend to render success less certain, besides making the population, when conquered, more hostile than ever before. There is, it must be confessed, in many of these utterances of General Sherman's a good deal that will not stand the test of careful examination. They show that Sherman's mind was not occupied solely in the work which alone it was his duty to attend to, that is, in the endeavor to solve the military problem before him; in other words, that he concerned himself more or less all the time with the popular and political questions connected with the war, — in this respect presenting a great contrast to Grant and Thomas. Evidences of this are to be found everywhere in his despatches and correspondence, — notably in his letters to General Hood and to the mayor and city government of Atlanta, in September, 1864,<sup>1</sup> and in the Memorandum or Basis of Agreement between him and General J. E. Johnston, in April, 1865.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, Sherman never for an instant pretermitted his active attention to the welfare of his army, or his study of the military problems which his masterly manœuvres were constantly presenting for his solution.

In truth, it is far from easy to draw the portrait of General Sherman. Here is an officer of high rank, who began his service in the war at the first battle of Bull Run; who received the surrender of the last of the Confederate generals; who was at the head of one of the finest armies in the country, but who never commanded in a great, still less a decisive, battle; whose most famous exploit consisted in marching a large and well-appointed force almost unopposed through the enemy's country; and whose reputation nevertheless stands as high, at least with the Northern public, as that of any of the generals of the Union. Such a sketch as the above certainly leaves much to be accounted for. Yet it is true so far as it goes. What is not stated in it con-

<sup>1</sup> 78 W. R., 416, 418.

<sup>2</sup> Sherman's Memoirs, 356.



tains, however, the solution of the apparent paradox. General Sherman's military abilities, though not exhibited conspicuously on the battlefield, were confessedly of a very high order. His Atlanta campaign proves this by universal admission. If we are surprised at his leaving to Thomas the task of resisting, and, if possible, destroying, the principal Confederate army in the West; if we fail, as we fairly may, to see in what respect Sherman gained anything in not following Grant's advice to "entirely settle" Hood before "starting" on his "proposed campaign," we must at the same time admit that no operation in the war was more skillfully carried out than that "proposed campaign." It accomplished all that Sherman had expected or hoped from it. It won not only the assent, but the admiration, of Grant and Lincoln. It captivated the popular mind. Closing as it did with the surrender of General Joseph E. Johnston, it virtually ended the war. And as Thomas's skill, endurance, courage, and good fortune enabled him to win the great victory which was the indispensable condition of success for the whole undertaking, the world has naturally not been over-curious to search for defects in arrangements which yielded such wonderfully complete results.

It is nevertheless to be remembered that if Sherman had followed up Hood, as the Washington authorities originally intended and desired him to do, before marching to the sea, the destruction of the Confederate army could hardly have failed to be more thorough than it was. The Southwestern and South Atlantic States would have been almost absolutely without defence; and the result of the campaign could hardly have been other than decisive. A certain amount of risk, on the other hand, it cannot be denied, attended the transfer of the greater part of Sherman's command to the Atlantic coast before Hood's army had been disposed of. Grant—who was easily converted to any project of his favorite lieutenant—and Sherman have sometimes shown a disposition to minimize

this risk, and hence to consider the victory of Nashville a very ordinary affair ; but it must not be forgotten that when Thomas's campaign was being fought Grant was terribly anxious. He did not know at the time, nor was he afterwards quite willing to admit, the existence of the difficulties under which Thomas labored, and which induced the delay on Thomas's part which Grant thought so unnecessary and so perilous to the retention of our hold on the States of Kentucky and Tennessee. But there were real and potent causes for Grant's anxiety ; and of course the action of General Sherman in carrying off sixty thousand men to the seacoast before the campaign in the West had been brought to a successful termination was the underlying cause of it all. Thomas, however, was equal to the occasion. He scored a magnificent success at Nashville. Sherman at the same time captured Savannah. Everything turned out marvellously well. Both officers showed themselves at their best. The risk having passed by, the North reaped the full advantage of the daring march. The task then before Sherman was one to which he was by nature wonderfully adapted, and which he soon brought to a triumphant end.

MAJOR-GENERAL  
JAMES EWELL BROWN STUART,

Commander of the Cavalry of the Army of Northern Virginia.

BY

JOHN C. ROPES.

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## GENERAL STUART.

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AMONG the valuable works which the South has contributed to the history of the late war, the "Life and Campaigns of General J. E. B. Stuart"<sup>1</sup> will take a high place. The book is by no means a mere biography of Stuart himself; it is a history, as the inscription on the side of the cover aptly puts it, of "the Campaigns of Stuart's Cavalry." We are prepared, therefore, to find a full and minute account of all the principal and of many of the subsidiary operations of that force. The account, indeed, is so full and so minute that it will tax the patience of the ordinary reader to master the descriptions of skirmishes and ambushes which, unimportant, perhaps, in their bearing on the great events of the war, were yet worthy of being carefully narrated in a work claiming to give a complete history of the cavalry of the Army of Northern Virginia. To any student of the military art, however, these literal and exact accounts of the mode of cavalry-fighting in our civil war cannot but be of very great and permanent interest; while any reader who is willing to give the time required for following out the descriptions with the aid of the excellent maps which accompany the volume will find himself well repaid in the peculiar attraction always attendant on watching the varying fortunes of a fight.

<sup>1</sup> The Life and Campaigns of Major-General J. E. B. Stuart, Commander of the Cavalry of the Army of Northern Virginia. By H. B. McClellan, A. M., late Major, Assistant Adjutant-General, and Chief of Staff of the Cavalry Corps, Army of Northern Virginia. Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Co. Richmond, Va.: J. W. Randolph & English. 1885.

Major McClellan was Stuart's Chief of Staff, and he is, as he should be, loyal to his general. But, so far as we can discover, he is actuated by an impartial spirit. Neither in his treatment of the Federal narratives, nor in his accounts of Confederate operations, do we find any evidence of partisanship. At the same time, allowance must be made for the fact that he writes from the standpoint of Stuart himself.

The function of cavalry in warfare has changed very much in the last thirty years. For hundreds — nay, thousands — of years, it remained substantially the same; the Numidian horse of Hannibal fought very much in the same way as did the cuirassiers of Napoleon. But with the introduction of improved firearms a change has gradually come about. We saw one of the last examples of the old method in the famous charge at Balaklava, thirty odd years ago; but that was condemned at the time as not being, strictly speaking, "war." In our great struggle, it seems to have been recognized from the first that the *rôle* of the cavalry was to be auxiliary only. They were employed — often most unjustifiably — to do the picket duty for the whole army; they were sent off on expeditions to cut telegraph wires, destroy railroads, capture depots of supplies, and generally to break up the enemy's communications. Columns of cavalry always preceded and covered the march of an army, and were expected to ascertain the position and intentions of the enemy. In these operations it of course often happened that severe fighting had to be done; but when infantry were encountered, the cavalry usually dismounted and fought as infantry. In fact, up to the Shenandoah Valley campaign of 1864, it was only when cavalry were opposed to cavalry that the hostile squadrons charged in the old style, using the sabre. Whether this mode of fighting would ever be resorted to now is certainly very questionable. With the repeating small arms of to-day in the hands of the troopers, such splendid attacks as were made by both the Federal and Confederate cavalry at Brandy

Station (or Fleetwood) would, we apprehend, never be attempted. It is the characteristic feature of the book before us that it gives all the necessary facts of a transitory yet very interesting phase in the history of the employment of cavalry in modern warfare. We have minute narratives of those daring raids in the rear of our armies, of which Stuart made at least three which were successful and famous. We have the details of the services performed by him when accompanying a column of infantry. We have careful and impartial, though naturally not always correct, descriptions of those obstinate and spirited hand-to-hand encounters between cavalry and cavalry which followed immediately on the reorganization of the Federal horse in the spring of 1863, and which will carry down to posterity the names of Buford and Gregg and Custer and Sheridan. The actions at Kelly's Ford, Brandy Station, Aldie Gap, Middleburg, Gettysburg, Yellow Tavern, are all described at length; and though there is a great deal that might be written to fill out, or to correct, or even in some cases to reverse, the conclusions of Major McClellan, the Federal historian must acknowledge his indebtedness to him as a fair and honest writer on his own side.

In Stuart the Confederacy had a natural leader of cavalry. Daring, cool, eminently a man of resources in an emergency, full of the spirit of adventure, young, gay, handsome, a fine horseman, he carried into the somewhat prosaic operations of our civil war not a little of the chivalrous spirit of former times. Belonging to one of the distinguished families of Virginia, and possessed of so many undoubted qualifications for his task, his position was an assured one from the very first. He took an active part in the first battle of Bull Run, winning the high commendation of Generals Johnston and Jackson. He commanded the entire cavalry of the Confederate Army on the Peninsula. It was here that he first acquired general reputation by his daring raid around our army, about the middle of June, 1862. Being the first per-

formance of the kind, the effect it produced upon the not very experienced soldiers of McClellan's army was considerable, and the expedition, rash and perilous as it certainly was, may fairly be said to have been justified under the circumstances of the case. In August of that year Stuart tried the same manœuvre again, getting in the rear of the army of General Pope, and capturing some of that officer's headquarters baggage. But though this was also a very daring and skilfully conducted affair, it did not strike either army as possessing the importance of the former raid. Stuart, however, who evidently enjoyed these expeditions, the management of which was peculiarly suited to his character and talents, undertook, not long after the battle of Antietam, still another, and perhaps more venturesome, incursion. In October, 1862, when Lee's army was in Virginia, Stuart crossed the Potomac at McCoy's Ferry, a short distance above Williamsport; proceeded rapidly to Chambersburg, where he obtained supplies of all kinds; then taking the Gettysburg road as far as Cashtown, he returned by way of Emmittsburg to White's Ferry, just above Conrad's Ferry, where he crossed the Potomac, eluding with great skill and good fortune the Federal troops, by whom his little force seemed to be well-nigh surrounded. What the object of this performance was, beyond exhibiting to the men of both armies what a fine set of fellows Stuart's cavalry were, what risks they were ready to take, and with what audacity and coolness they could escape from the snares laid for them by their foes, we are at a loss to know. But the importance of distributing information of this kind is hardly to be weighed against the danger of losing such an auxiliary to an army as Stuart and his command. As it was, everything turned out well enough; the Federal generals were annoyed, and the Northern public was irritated. But suppose that Pleasanton had not been misled by false reports, and that Stuart and his raiders had been taken: any one can see what effect that news would have had upon both



armies. It would have been a serious blow to the confidence reposed by the South in their generals, and it could not have failed greatly to encourage the North.

General Stuart was now to have a rare opportunity for distinction. In the campaign of Chancellorsville, as hitherto, he commanded the cavalry. On the evening of the 2d of May, after the crushing assault on the Eleventh Corps, the great Confederate leader, Stonewall Jackson, was severely wounded, and his place was filled by A. P. Hill, who, while exerting himself to repair the disorder into which the troops had necessarily fallen in their onward and successful movement, and to resist the counter-attacks which Sickles, at the head of the undismayed veterans of the Third Corps, was fiercely making to recover the lost ground, was wounded himself. Then Lee sent for Stuart, and put him in command of Jackson's corps. It was a proud moment in Stuart's life, and a great honor for so young an officer, for he was but just thirty years old. The task before him was, fortunately, neither an ambiguous nor a complicated task. There was but one thing to do, and that was to fight. Of the battle which raged so fiercely on Sunday morning; of the repeated, desperate, persistent assaults which Stuart directed against our position; of the energy and enthusiasm which he inspired; and of the gallantry with which from time to time he led the troops himself, we have not time to speak. Fierce and determined as were those repeated attacks, however, nothing but the gross mismanagement of Hooker can account for their having overcome the steady and obstinate resistance of the troops of Sickles and Slocum. But we need not dwell on this ever painful episode in the war. Suffice it to say that Stuart acquitted himself admirably.

His services were, however, more needed in the cavalry. In the severe actions which occurred in the spring and early summer of 1863, at Brandy Station, Aldie Gap, Middleburg, and Gettysburg, cavalry met cavalry, and, as has been before

said, the fighting was of the most approved old style, horse to horse, and sabre to sabre. In these engagements the Federals displayed a confidence and courage which had rarely been observed before, and which was the result of the thorough reorganization of our cavalry, for which the army was indebted to General Hooker probably more than to any one else.

Stuart's course in the campaign of Gettysburg has been severely criticised as well by Confederate as by Federal authorities. When Lee determined on the invasion of the North, he left a large force of cavalry to guard the passes of the Blue Ridge. He took a very small force to cover the march of the army. The remainder he entrusted to Stuart, and practically gave him *carte blanche* as to the route he should take to compass the two objects of ascertaining the movements of the enemy and communicating his information to General Lee. Stuart, instead of keeping on the right flank of the Confederate columns, between them and our army, chose the devious and complicated course of passing to the south of our corps while they were marching north, thus getting between them and Washington, and then crossing the Potomac near Washington at Rowser's Ford. He expected to make a complete circuit around our army, as he had twice done before, and to bring seasonable information of Hooker's whereabouts and operations to his commanding officer. Looked at from any point of view, this plan was bad. It necessarily involved the separation of the cavalry from the rest of the army for a period, the duration of which no one could guess, and it exposed it, moreover, to be cut off and captured. The only recommendations of the project were its adventurousness, which we suspect was a pretty strong recommendation in the eyes of General Stuart, and the possibility of doing some damage to the communications of the Army of the Potomac by operating between it and Washington. With such a small force as accompanied Stuart, however, no great successes in this direction were

to be looked for, while the danger of utter failure from the discovery of his exposed position by the Federal army — which, contrary to his expectation, did not rest near Washington, but continued to march north — daily increased. Not only was Stuart thus made aware of a concentration of the Federal army in Pennsylvania, a fact of the utmost importance to General Lee, but the very movements of the Federal corps by which this concentration was effected prevented Stuart from sending his information to the headquarters of his commander. It must also be admitted that Stuart was far from showing that clear, strong sense which a man like Stonewall Jackson would have shown in a like situation. Having early made a trumpery capture of a lot of wagons and prisoners, he persisted in carrying them along with him, in spite of the delay they were manifestly causing. He never seems to have realized that so long as he was unable to communicate with Lee he was in a false position, from which he ought to make every effort to escape. As for the claim put forward by Major McClellan, that Stuart hindered the movements of the Federal army, that, with all submission, is an entire mistake. “My main point,” wrote Meade to Halleck, “being to find and fight the enemy, I shall have to submit to the cavalry raid around me in some measure.”<sup>1</sup> Stuart reached Gettysburg on the afternoon of the 2d of July. But by that time the mischief had been done. General Lee, deprived of his cavalry, had been concentrating his army on Gettysburg, in ignorance of General Meade’s movements. His leading divisions had, on the day before, encountered the First and Eleventh Corps of the Federal army near Gettysburg, and had beaten them after an obstinate struggle. The Federal general had, nevertheless, decided to concentrate his whole army here and await an attack. On the 2d of July Lee followed up his first success by driving the Third Federal Corps from an untenable position. Unable now to

<sup>1</sup> 43 W. R., 67.

resist the influences of the hour, he was about to essay the hazardous task of assaulting the steady infantry of the Northern army, thinned but not a whit daunted by their ill luck on the past two days, and holding a strong, well-defined position. In truth, Lee's only chance, humanly speaking, lay in compelling the Federal army to attack him; but, owing to his ignorance of our designs and movements, his troops struck their enemy unexpectedly, and having been thus far — owing in part, at least, to adventitious circumstances — successful, Lee, on the 3d of July, made that gallant, but rash, assault on our left centre, the utter repulse of which left Meade the victor of the three days' fight. Whether, if Stuart's cavalry had been with the main army, Lee would or could have so managed that Meade would have been induced to assault him in position, no one, of course, can say; all we know is that the battle, as it was fought, was unpremeditated by General Lee, — that it was not the kind of battle which he had intended to deliver.

General Stuart's services in the Wilderness campaign were very brief. In the winter of 1863–64 our cavalry, then under Sheridan, had vastly improved; the cavalry of the Confederates, on the other hand, was weak in numbers and poorly equipped. Early in the campaign, Sheridan, with some 12,000 horse, moved in rear of the army of Lee and threatened Richmond. In a severe action at Yellow Tavern, Stuart was mortally wounded. He met his fate like a brave and good man, as he was. Major McClellan's narrative here is simple and very touching.

We have extended this review to a greater length than we originally intended. But among the heroic figures of the war, the gallant leader of the Confederate cavalry is certainly one of the most attractive.

MAJOR-GENERAL  
GEORGE HENRY THOMAS.

BY

HENRY STONE,

BREVET COLONEL, U. S. V.

*Read before the Society on Tuesday evening, March 11, 1890.*

The following is a list of the published writings by Colonel Stone, concerning the Civil War: —

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE ARMY OF THE CUMBERLAND. [Annual Oration delivered at the Nineteenth Reunion of the Society of the Army of the Cumberland, held at Chicago, September 19-20, 1888. In the Report of that Reunion, pages 71-112.] Cincinnati, 1889.

HOOD'S INVASION OF TENNESSEE. [In] The Century Magazine, August, 1887, Vol. 34, No. 4, pages 597-616; [also in] Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, . . . Edited by Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel. 4 vols., New York, 1887, Vol. 4, pages 440-464.

GENERAL GEORGE H. THOMAS. [In] The Atlantic Monthly, October, 1891, Vol. 68, No. 408, pages 506-514.

MEMORIAL BIOGRAPHIES in the Reports of the Reunions of the Society of the Army of the Cumberland, 1884-1894.

See list of Papers read before the Military Historical Society of Massachusetts at the end of this volume.

## GENERAL THOMAS.

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It has been the fortune of General Thomas to create the conviction, in the minds of the best judges among those who knew him best, that he was a soldier of consummate ability. This conviction has sometimes been challenged ; chiefly, perhaps, on the ground that it was based on personal admiration rather than on military achievements. His career affords the only test of his merits. This Society is composed mainly of soldiers ; of men who have studied, and had more or less experience in military operations. To the consideration of judges thus qualified, facts, not eulogy, constitute the highest appeal. But even by such a tribunal, the exceptional position of General Thomas during the War of the Rebellion is entitled to its due weight.

Born in Virginia, in 1816, — when that State was still the mother of Presidents, — young Thomas was trained in supreme devotion to her name and history. Every fibre of his being thrilled at the contemplation of her achievements in war and peace. Within a short distance from his birthplace lay Yorktown, where was won the last decisive battle for American independence. Soldiers who had served under Washington from Valley Forge to final victory, poured into his youthful ears the stories of their hardships and the greatness of their leader. The war of 1812, in which Virginia suffered much desolation, had just ended. Madison was President, to be followed by Monroe, the fourth Virginian of the five Presidents during the first thirty-six years of our national life. Marshall was Chief-Justice, and was to hold, unrivalled, that

eminent position till Thomas had grown to manhood. With an interval of only seven years, the secretaryship of State was filled by Virginians, till Monroe laid down the office to become President. William Wirt was Attorney-General for twelve years, — still a great name after two generations. It seemed impossible that the government could be carried on without one or more Virginians in the Cabinet; and the counsels of Virginians in Congress largely prevailed. Robert E. Lee, trained in the same school of doctrine, became so blindly the slave of its traditions, that, in 1861, he resigned his commission in the army, though he confessed, when he did it, that he recognized “no necessity for the state of things into which Virginia had been drawn.” With all his alleged “devotion to the Union, and the feeling of loyalty and duty of an American citizen,” he could “not take part against his native State.” Thomas, almost alone, save Scott, of officers of high rank in the army, and conspicuous social position, remained true to his oath and his flag. Of the ninety-seven Virginians whose names are in the Army Register for January 1, 1861, only seven of the line of the army are found in that for January 1, 1862. That Thomas was one of the seven, proves him a man of no common mould. This fidelity, in one so born and reared, should have aided in his advancement, as time and events demonstrated his capacity. But it worked rather to his detriment. Unquestionably, Grant and Sherman owed as much, for the early and constant recognition of their merits, to the fact that they were constituents and wards of representatives like Washburne and senators like John Sherman, as to anything they did in the field. In political life, too, the loyalty of Southern men was conspicuously rewarded. Andrew Johnson became possible President only because he was a Southerner. But the fact that Thomas was a Virginian excited, at first, groundless suspicion; and afterwards delayed appreciation. There was no one at hand, in Washington, when honors were to be



conferred, to remember this modest, truthful, untiring, always successful soldier. Whatever recognition came to him came late, and was compelled by his own soldierly devotion and genius.

He was fortunate in his ancestral inheritance. Descended on his father's side from Welsh parentage, as the name indicates, — from that people who, almost alone of all Europe, remained unconquered by the arms or arts of Cæsar, — and, on his mother's, from those Huguenots of France who kept the faith against all consequences, it is easy to trace, in his mental and moral traits, as well as in his physical appearance and bearing, the influence of such heredity. The mingling of the somewhat opposing qualities he drew from each — a gentle voice and manner, quick, high temper, unconquerable courage, inflexible will, delicate sensitiveness, a commanding sense of duty — was admirably harmonized into a well-rounded character. He was already quite mature in years and intellect when, in 1836, he entered the Military Academy. Passing through Washington on his way to West Point, he called to thank Mr. Mason, his Representative, — afterwards Secretary of the Navy, — for his appointment. Mr. Mason said to him: "No Cadet from our district has ever yet graduated. If you do not, I never want to see your face again." His career at the Academy was highly creditable. From twenty-sixth in rank at the end of the first year, he rose to be twelfth at graduation. He was successively cadet-corporal, sergeant, and lieutenant. He averaged twenty-two demerits a year. His traits of character and appearance, and his Virginia birth, brought him the nickname of George Washington. Assigned, at graduation, to the Third Artillery as Second Lieutenant, he was sent in November, 1840, to Florida, to take part in the closing scenes of the Seminole War. In a highly successful expedition, resulting in the capture of forty-nine Indians, he won the brevet of First Lieutenant,

November 6, 1841, "for gallantry and good conduct," — alone of all his contemporaries the recipient of such an honor. His immediate commander, Captain Wade, and the department commander, Colonel Worth, make special mention of his valuable and efficient services.

In August, 1845, he was sent to the Mexican frontier. He was at Corpus Christi and on the Rio Grande till the battle of Monterey, in which he took part. In this action, General Henderson, commanding the Texas Volunteers, thus speaks of him: "I beg leave to compliment Lieutenant Thomas for the bold advance and efficient management of the force under his charge. When ordered to retire, he reloaded his piece, fired a farewell shot at the foe, and returned under a shower of bullets." General Twiggs, his division commander, mentions him as "deserving the highest praise for skill and good conduct under the heaviest fire of the enemy." "For gallantry and meritorious conduct" here he won his second brevet, as Captain, to date from September 23, 1846. He was one of the few regular officers left with General Taylor, when the main army, under Scott, advanced to the City of Mexico. In the battle of Buena Vista, February 22-23, 1847, he bore a still more efficient part. In every report, his name is mentioned with high praise. Of the twenty-five killed, wounded and missing in the two companies of regular artillery in that battle, eighteen were from Thomas's company. Captain T. W. Sherman, — of Sherman's Flying Artillery, — his immediate commander, speaking of the tenacity with which the advanced and exposed position was held, says that he found Lieutenant Thomas on the plateau, "who had been constantly engaged during the forenoon in the preservation of that important position;" that he behaved nobly throughout the action, and his coolness and firmness contributed not a little to the success of the day; and that he "more than sustained the reputation he has long enjoyed

in his regiment as an accurate and scientific artilleryman." General Wool ascribes our success to the artillery, and expresses great admiration of five officers whom he names, — Thomas the junior among them, — "to whose services," he says, "we are mainly indebted for the great victory over more than 20,000 men. Without our artillery, we could not have maintained our position a single hour." General Taylor also names Thomas as among those officers who "in every situation exhibited conspicuous skill and gallantry." Ripley, in his History, describes the operations of the artillery in great detail, and says that at a critical moment, when threatened by an overwhelming foe, Thomas kept up his fire on the advancing enemy, retreating only by the recoil of his pieces.<sup>1</sup> For this battle, he was again brevetted, — this time as Major, — for "gallant and meritorious conduct," to date from February 23, 1847. Thus, in a period of less than five and a half years, he had won three brevets, an almost unprecedented distinction in the annals of the army up to that time. It was not until nearly seven years later, December 24, 1853, that he was promoted to a captaincy. The citizens of his native county of Southampton, proud of his honorable career, in July, 1847, presented him a magnificent sword, in token of their appreciation of his "patience, firmness, fortitude and daring intrepidity."

Meantime, he was employed on almost every kind of duty that falls to a subaltern: quartermaster, commissary, recruiting officer, battery commander, — in Texas, Louisiana, Florida and Boston. From his post at Fort Independence, he was detailed, April 1, 1851, as Instructor of Cavalry and Artillery at the Military Academy. He remained on that duty three years. Among those who then came under his instruction were many of the most distinguished officers in the War of the Rebellion: Slocum, Stanley, McCook, McPherson, Crook, Sheridan, Hood, Custis Lee, Ruger,

<sup>1</sup> 1 Ripley, 418.

Howard, J. E. B. Stuart, and others. All of those named on the Union side served under him, and most of those on the rebel side against him, during the war. On the expiration of his tour of duty at West Point, he was sent May 1, 1854, to Fort Yuma, in Lower California, a place of absolute exile from all the surroundings and comforts of civilization. But he made his exile pleasant and profitable by the investigation of geography and natural history, studies which always fascinated him. The Museums of the Smithsonian Institution contain many specimens of unique value from his contributions.

Early in 1855, the army was enlarged. Of one of the new cavalry regiments, — the Second, now the Fifth, — Captain Thomas, then junior captain of artillery, was appointed Major. The appointment had been offered to Captain Braxton Bragg of the same regiment, who declined, as his resignation, accepted a year later, had already been determined upon. He is said to have recommended Thomas. If so, he unwittingly made amends for his subsequent mischief. These new cavalry regiments were the choicest in the army. In no similar case were such pains taken in the selection of officers. Jefferson Davis was Secretary of War, and was chiefly responsible for the names. Sumner, already a veteran, was made Colonel of the First, with Joseph E. Johnston, Lieutenant-Colonel, and Emory and Sedgwick for Majors. In the Second, Albert Sidney Johnston was made Colonel, Robert E. Lee, Lieutenant-Colonel, and Hardee and Thomas, Majors. The most significant fact, however, was that more than two-thirds of the officers were of Southern birth and residence. From the Second Cavalry, twenty-four entered the rebel service, of whom twelve became general officers, Sidney Johnston and Lee holding the highest positions from the outset. Among such professional and personal associations, Thomas passed the six years preceding that April day in 1861, which decided the fate of the republic.

The greater part of this time he was in Texas, where every influence, together with his own almost morbid aversion to politics, conspired to minimize the sentiment of allegiance to the government, under the anticipated change of administration; while the imbecility of the existing administration pointed almost inevitably to approaching dissolution.

While thus stationed in Texas, Major Thomas sent a communication to the adjutant-general, dated July 7, 1857, when the Utah expedition under Sidney Johnston was fitting out. In it he detailed the information he had gained while an artillery officer at Fort Yuma, three years before, concerning the possible navigability of the Colorado River. He gives the facts he had learned from careful questioning of the Hamok-ain, the Navajo, and the Pay-Ute Indians, which led him to think that the river was navigable to within one hundred or two hundred miles of Salt Lake City. If that were so, he concludes, "it will be not only the most direct, but the most convenient and safest route to convey supplies to the troops stationed in Utah Territory." This letter shows not merely great interest in geography, as well as in his own profession, but it also gives evidence of an intelligent study of philology, as well as of close observation. In that self-constituted, but commanding, inner circle which, in every society, sits in judgment and forms a kind of court of appeals, Thomas had received the verdict of absolute approval,—so far as the army is concerned,—as early as 1855. But, outside the army, he was little known. Even in so important a crisis as April and May, 1861, when he was so rapidly promoted, he was to the authorities at Washington merely a name; though in the army, which for twenty years had witnessed his capacity, fidelity and power, that name was a synonym for whatever was most excellent in the profession of arms. Unfortunately, most of those who best knew him had deserted the cause of their country. Thus, while the Johnstons, and Lee, and Bragg, and Hardee—the most

competent witnesses — were incapacitated to testify, the very fact that he had been their approved confidant and friend now counted against him. He could not speak for himself except by deeds; and what he had done was overlooked in the hurly-burly of the present.

On the 1st of November, 1860, before the presidential election, Major Thomas left Texas on a long leave of absence, granted some months before. A railroad accident, from the effects of which he never fully recovered, compelled him to remain in New York City through most of the following winter. Those who knew, or can remember, the atmosphere of that city at that time, especially that breathed in the corridors of the New York hotel at which he made his home, know that nowhere, even in Virginia or South Carolina, was secession more openly or ardently advocated. Here he saw, with inexpressible anxiety, the rising of the coming storm. He was a soldier in the fullest sense of the term. For twenty years he had had no thought, or wish, or capacity but to serve his country in his chosen profession. As State after State went through the form of secession, and fort after fort was abandoned by the administration, it began to seem to him as though he would soon have no country to serve. His regiment had been treacherously surrendered by Twiggs to a mob of Texas insurgents. The remnants of it began to arrive in New York early in April. On the 10th, he received orders revoking the unexpired portion of his leave, and directing him to conduct the companies already landed to Carlisle Barracks, for reorganization. He cheerfully obeyed the order. On his way there, the guns opened against Fort Sumter. His answer to the challenge was immediate and significant. On his arrival at Carlisle, he sought a magistrate, before whom, with the profoundest solemnity, he renewed his oath of allegiance to the United States of America. On the 20th, Lieutenant-Colonel Robert E. Lee left Arlington for Richmond and entered at once upon the

service of Virginia, though his resignation from the Army of the United States was not yet accepted. On the 25th, Major Thomas was promoted to be lieutenant-colonel to fill the vacancy made by Lee's defection. A week later, on the 3d of May, he was promoted to be colonel, in place of Sidney Johnston, who had forwarded his resignation from California, and was stealthily making his way overland to Texas, to join his fortunes with that State, when he found that his own State of Kentucky remained steadfast in the Union.

On the 27th of April, the Department of Pennsylvania was created, with General Robert Patterson as commander. In the organization of troops in this department, Colonel Thomas, on the 29th of May, was assigned to the command of the First Brigade consisting of part of his own regiment and three regiments of three months militia from Pennsylvania. On the 12th of June, he led the advance to the Potomac River at Williamsport. On the 2d of July, he crossed into Virginia at the head of his brigade, where he encountered and helped put to flight a force of Virginia troops under Stonewall Jackson and J. E. B. Stuart, aggregating 2,600 men. Thus his first encounter with the enemy during the Rebellion was in his own State, and was entirely successful. Though but slight resistance was made, all the moral effects of victory were with the Union troops. Colonel Thomas's admirable bearing is spoken of in all the reports, and was never forgotten by any who saw it. Among the soldiers then in the ranks was Samuel J. Randall, since Speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States. On the 3d of August this private soldier wrote to his old friend, Thomas A. Scott, just appointed Assistant Secretary of War: "I notice that the Government is now considering the appointment of proper persons to be brigadier-generals. In the name of God, let them be men fully competent. . . . [For nearly three months] we have been under command of

Colonel George H. Thomas. . . . He is thoroughly competent to be a brigadier-general, has the confidence of every man in his command for the reason that they recognize and appreciate capacity. . . . This appointment would give renewed vigor and courage to this section of the army. I am, as perhaps you know, a private in the First City Cavalry of Philadelphia, and I never saw Colonel Thomas until I saw him on parade, and our intercourse has only been such as exists between a colonel and one of his soldiers; hence, you see my recommendation comes from pure motives, and entirely free from social or political considerations. . . . You will do the country a service by giving my letter a serious consideration.”<sup>1</sup> But it required more than the recommendation of a private soldier, even like Samuel J. Randall, to secure such an appointment. When the first list came out, among the thirty-eight appointed as Brigadier-Generals of Volunteers, to date from May 17, 1861, were Fitz John Porter, Patterson’s Adjutant-General; Charles P. Stone, a brigade commander; George A. McCall, of the Pennsylvania militia; and Charles S. Hamilton, Colonel of a Wisconsin regiment, all of whom were in that column; to say nothing of men like Sigel, and Prentiss, and McClelland, and Blenker, elsewhere; but the name of Colonel Thomas, who had done more than any other there, was lacking. It is worthy of mention, also, that when, after the disaster at Bull Run, General Patterson was made the scapegoat for that catastrophe, Thomas unhesitatingly took his part in the controversy that ensued.

Early in August General Robert Anderson was assigned to the command of the Department of the Cumberland. He insisted on the appointment of Colonel Thomas; and it was only in consequence of his urgency that, on the 17th of August, the latter was made Brigadier-General of Volunteers, and assigned to that department, with which he was identified till

<sup>1</sup> Van Horne’s *Life of Thomas*, 37.



the close of the war. He stood 55th in the list, though in the old army he had ranked every one of those who became his superiors in the Volunteer service. On the 6th of September he reported for duty at Louisville, and from that day till the last soldier was mustered out, did not have or seek an hour's intermission from active duty. The first work in his new department was the organization and instruction of the rawest of raw recruits from Kentucky and Tennessee. No task could be more irksome than the discipline of these wild mountaineers. Every one of them deemed himself already amply able to fight, and each as good as any other, officers included. It was proper work for the drill sergeant, not for the general. But he gave himself to it with a patience, assiduity and faithfulness which soon transformed the uncouth refugees into soldiers unsurpassed for endurance, courage and energy. He had hardly reached Louisville before he found that the rebel State Guard, under the leadership of Buckner, Breckinridge and others, was planning an encampment at Lexington, ostensibly for drill, really to seize the arms in the arsenal at Frankfort and subvert the State government. Their purposes were similar to those of the militia at Camp Jackson, in St. Louis, which was broken up by General Lyon in May previous. Without orders or advice, General Thomas silently marched a regiment to the Fair Ground the night before the day of rendezvous. Thus without collision, he defeated the scheme. Breckinridge and his followers fled the next night. This foresight and promptitude gained a moral victory and unquestionably prevented an effort — most likely a successful effort — at bloody revolution in the capital of Kentucky. It was all done so quietly that nobody then realized the importance of the service thus rendered. It is only now, in the light of history and of all the surrounding and subsequent circumstances, that its value is seen. Great reputations have sometimes been won for less useful services.

From the outset, it had been the purpose of the government

to send an expedition into East Tennessee, to help free that beleaguered and persecuted region from rebel oppression. Delay followed delay, till the coming of winter put a stop to further effort. General Thomas had moved as far as Somerset, in southeastern Kentucky, — making only seventy-five miles in eighteen days, — when, at daylight on the 19th of January, 1862, at Logan's Cross Roads, about twelve miles from Cumberland River, his outposts were driven in by the advance of nine rebel regiments of infantry, two battalions of cavalry, and two batteries of artillery. It was a cold, rainy, cheerless morning. He had with him five regiments of infantry, a battery, and a regiment of cavalry. As the cavalry vedettes were attacked, the colonel of the advance regiment of infantry, after ordering the long roll beaten, rode back to Thomas's headquarters, to ask what he should do. When Thomas reached the field, soon after, he found the two regiments which formed the front line slowly falling back, their ammunition nearly exhausted. His presence at once gave confidence and steadiness to the men, who needed only a leader. Two other regiments soon arrived, which, with the battery, restored the line. For some hours the fighting continued without much advantage to either side. About 10 o'clock, hearing of the approach of two additional regiments, General Thomas ordered a charge by the 9th Ohio — a German regiment well drilled in bayonet exercise — on the rebel left. About the same time, General Zollicoffer, commanding the rebel advance, was killed. The result was instantaneous and overwhelming. The entire Confederate line was thrown into confusion and began a disorderly retreat, which lasted till night. The demoralized remnant reached the fortifications on the banks of the Cumberland, from which they had marched the evening before confident of the rout or capture of Thomas's isolated regiments. The pursuit was relentless. By dark, the works were surrounded. During the night, such as could, escaped across the river, leaving

behind guns and all their transportation and supplies. The rebel force outnumbered the Union troops nearly two to one. They were commanded by General George B. Crittenden, who had been especially assigned to that post by Jefferson Davis. The Union loss was 39 killed, and 207 wounded. The rebel, 192 killed, 309 wounded, and 157 prisoners, besides 12 guns and much property. The Confederate force was so thoroughly demoralized that it never came together again as a separate organization. General Crittenden's career was ended. General Sidney Johnston, at Bowling Green one hundred miles west, when he heard of the disaster, wrote to Richmond: "If my right is thus broken, as stated, East Tennessee is open to invasion, or if the plan of the enemy be a combined movement upon Nashville, it is in jeopardy. . . . The country must now be roused to make the greatest effort they will be called on to make during the contest. . . . Our people do not comprehend the magnitude of the danger that threatens."<sup>1</sup>

To the authorities at Washington, the news of the victory came as a burst of sunshine after a long and stormy season. It was the first real triumph since the dreadful day at Bull Run. Stanton had not been Secretary of War a week when the glad tidings reached him. In an exuberant order, he returned the thanks of the President "to the gallant officers and soldiers who won that victory," and promised that, when the official reports were received, "the military and personal valor displayed in battle will be acknowledged and rewarded in a fitting manner."<sup>2</sup> This promise, so far as Thomas was concerned, was never fulfilled. His name was not mentioned in orders then or afterward. Three regimental commanders, were, indeed, made brigadier-generals, one of whom had so acted that General Thomas ever after refused to hold any intercourse with him. Even the commissions that were granted did not bear date from the battle for which

<sup>1</sup> 7 W. R., 844.

<sup>2</sup> 7 W. R., 102.

they were conferred; while the organizer and leader, whose presence and conduct alone made victory possible, was forgotten or overlooked.

Immediately following this brilliant victory came the movement against Fort Donelson, and Grant's great triumph there. The East Tennessee expedition was recalled and the Army of the Cumberland marched to Nashville, and thence to the field of Shiloh. In this last movement Thomas's division was in the rear, and did not reach the Tennessee River till the battle was over. Later, when Halleck took the field, he so reorganized the forces that Thomas was placed in command of the right wing, made up of his own division and the bulk of Grant's Shiloh army. He thus, practically, superseded Grant, who was made second in command, a position that gave him neither power nor responsibility. Undoubtedly, here began that misunderstanding, or lack of good understanding, between the two generals which was never cleared up, and which operated greatly to the detriment of the service. They ought to have been the closest of friends. If Thomas, rather than Sherman, had been Grant's chosen lieutenant in the great campaigns which followed, it is impossible not to believe that their results would have been far more effective. But Thomas had not the arts of the courtier; and Grant brooded over the slights which Halleck had put upon him, and for which Thomas was made the vicarious sufferer.

On the 25th of April, 1862, on the recommendation of Buell and Halleck, Thomas was made Major-General of Volunteers to fill the vacancy caused by the death of C. F. Smith. In June, after the occupaney of Corinth, he was relieved at his own desire from the command of the five divisions of the right wing, and with his old division rejoined Buell's army. From the 1st of July to the 1st of October, that army underwent as arduous, and, as it then seemed to them, as purposeless hardships as ever fell to the lot of soldiers.

Leaving Corinth with the avowed purpose of occupying Chattanooga, it found itself, on the 1st of October, at Louisville, three hundred and fifty miles in the rear of its original destination. Here the command of the army was conferred on Thomas.<sup>1</sup> His answer was: "General Buell's preparations have been completed to move against the enemy, and I therefore respectfully ask that he may be retained in command. My position is very embarrassing, not being so well informed as I should be as the commander of this army, on the assumption of such responsibility."<sup>2</sup> General Buell was accordingly continued in command. Under him was fought, on the 8th of October, the important and successful battle of Perryville, in which the troops with Thomas were not engaged. On the 30th, Buell was superseded by Rosecrans. It is not easy to see why, if Thomas was the fit man to supersede Buell on the 24th of September, another should have been designated on the 30th of October. But he accepted the choice loyally, not without a protest, however, against having a junior in rank placed over him;<sup>3</sup> a protest nullified by the arbitrary antedating of Rosecrans's appointment as Major-General, from its original day, August 16, to the 21st of March. Under its new commander, the army returned to Tennessee, the leading division reaching Nashville on the 7th of November. Thomas, who during the early summer had made himself thoroughly familiar with all the approaches to Chattanooga, advocated an immediate advance, at least to the Cumberland mountains, and presented a plan for the movement, substantially that which was followed so successfully six months later.<sup>4</sup> But it was received in silence. No attempt at advance was made till the end of December, when the enemy were found concentrated and fortified at Murfreesboro'.

In the bloody and long continued battle of Stone's River, fought near that place in the closing hours of 1862 and the

<sup>1</sup> 23 W. R., 539.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*, 555.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*, 657.

<sup>4</sup> 30 W. R., 61.

opening days of 1863, Thomas commanded the centre. His whole force consisted of five divisions; but only two were with him during the first day's fight, and a single additional brigade joined him the second day. Within an hour after the opening of the battle at daybreak of December 31, the whole right wing of the Union army was driven from the field, half of it in dire confusion. On the action of Thomas's two divisions then depended the fate of the day. As Sheridan, whose division joined Thomas's right, and who maintained his organization unbroken, was driven back by overwhelming numbers, — his ammunition exhausted, his three brigade commanders dead on the field, and nearly one-third of his men killed or wounded, — Thomas met the shock with unmoved firmness. He had sent forward a brigade to relieve the pressure upon Sheridan; and, when this was also forced back, the rest of his line was ready and held its ground. His whole force in action numbered about 11,000 men. His loss was 2,678, more than twenty-four per cent. One of his brigades lost over forty per cent. Alone of all the troops in line that morning, except the division that joined his left, he was unshaken by any assault; and continued to hold the ground he had chosen till the enemy, three days later, abandoned the field. It was a brigade of his, also, which, on the afternoon of January 2, charged across the river, captured a battery, and so shattered Breckinridge's division, which had been sent against Rosecrans's left flank, that Bragg felt compelled to order the retreat of his whole army, — leaving the Union forces in possession of the field.

Not merely in the storm of the battle was Thomas firm and immovable. In the anxious and sorrowful council of war held by the commanding general on the night of December 31, amidst the wreck of the Union forces, when the question was discussed of maintaining the ground, or of retreating to Nashville or elsewhere, his mind was equally fixed. During most of the discussion he was fast asleep.

When waked with the question of whether he could cover the rear of the retiring army, his sole answer was, "This army can't retreat," and he went to sleep again.

It was near the end of June before the advance from Murfreesboro' began. By a series of most skilful manœuvres, the enemy, in the space of two weeks, was forced across the Tennessee River into Chattanooga. Another halt of six weeks followed. On the 16th of August began the movement which, a month later, culminated in the battle of Chickamauga. In this battle, by the universal testimony of friends and foes, Thomas's heroic and inspiring leadership saved the army from final destruction. But, what is of equal consequence, his action at the very opening of the contest, by his unordered and unexpected assault on the enemy's right, prevented the accomplishment of Bragg's cherished purpose of placing his own army between Rosecrans and Chattanooga, and so cutting off all communication between the Union force and its only base of supplies. This early collision was accidental and unanticipated. But the promptness with which Thomas took advantage of the unlooked for collision, and turned it to good account, showed great generalship. The same great generalship marks every stage of the encounter on his part. General Garfield's telegraphic report, written at 8.40 on the night of September 20, when fresh from the sight of the heroic defence, shows us the final result in a few strong words: "General Thomas has fought a most terrific battle and has damaged the enemy badly. . . . Longstreet's Virginians have got their bellies full. . . . I believe we can now crown the whole battle with victory."<sup>1</sup> And Mr. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, who was also on the ground, telegraphed to Washington: "Our troops were as immovable as the rocks they stood on. . . . Thomas seemed to have filled every soldier with his own unconquerable firmness."<sup>2</sup> When, at dark, under orders from General

<sup>1</sup> 50 W. R., 145.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, 194-195.

Rosecrans in Chattanooga, the army fell back to Rossville, every man in it knew and felt that Thomas was, indeed, "the Rock of Chickamauga."

It has sometimes been intimated that the Western armies were successful because they did not encounter such troops as Lee commanded in Virginia. Comparisons of this kind are of little value, since, in each army, Eastern and Western troops were intermingled. When Longstreet's corps, which had been counted the flower of Lee's army, on the afternoon of September 20, — led by such division commanders as Hood and Kershaw, and others equally gallant, — after the rout and dispersion of Rosecrans's right wing, surged up against the semi-circle of men of whom Thomas was the centre, with ranks thinned, and ammunition reduced, with few cannon and no reserves, everything gone but manhood and the ground they stood on, — it recoiled from those invincible lines, as completely baffled and broken as when, nearly three months earlier, the remnant of Pickett's men, mowed down by the fire of a hundred guns, and assaulted front and flank, drifted back from the heights of Cemetery Ridge and gave up the field of Gettysburg. Nor, later still, did the same troops meet any better success in their attempt to capture Knoxville. These were the only occasions when any of Lee's troops encountered the armies of the West. The result was not encouraging. Longstreet's loss, killed, wounded and missing, on the 20th of September, was 7,866 out of 22,882 engaged; nearly thirty-five per cent. of the number taken into action.

A month after Chickamauga, on the 20th of October, General Thomas superseded General Rosecrans. He accepted the command reluctantly; not through any false modesty as to his own capacity or fitness, but because he believed that Rosecrans ought to be permitted to work out his plans for the supplying of his army. This, however, was not left to any option. Both the War Department and General Grant



were of opinion that, at all events, Rosecrans should be relieved. On the 30th of September, the Secretary of War had written to Mr. Dana: "The merit of General Thomas and the debt of gratitude the nation owes to his valor and skill are fully appreciated here, and I wish you to tell him so. It was not my fault that he was not in chief command months ago."<sup>1</sup> He was thus, for the first time, in a position to show, on a large scale, his capacity as a general. But the post was soon made far from independent. Simultaneously with his assignment, General Grant was made Commander of the Military Division of the Mississippi, and came to Chattanooga to give his personal oversight to matters there. Thus, while Thomas was held to all the responsibilities at a critical juncture, he was so directly under the eye of his superior as to impede, or repress, proper freedom of action, especially in view of the known prejudice entertained by Grant. His situation was much like that of General Meade, after Grant, as General-in-Chief, took the field in Virginia. Before Grant's arrival, Thomas, as the result of the observations of General W. F. Smith, had elaborated a plan for shortening the wagon haul between Chattanooga and Bridgeport to only eight miles, by using Brown's Ferry, hitherto held by the enemy, and by calling up to Wauhatchie a part of the troops sent from Virginia under General Hooker. The great problem at Chattanooga was how to get meat and drink. This Thomas soon solved, so that, on the 31st of October, he joyfully announced to Halleck: "We can easily subsist ourselves now, and will soon be in good condition."<sup>2</sup> The results of this plan were equal to a great victory, and success was gained by a Union loss of only 82 killed and 344 wounded, the greater part of the loss being met in a night attack made on Hooker, in Lookout Valley, in which our late associate, General Underwood, received his serious and disabling wound.

<sup>1</sup> 52 W. R., 946.

<sup>2</sup> 54 W. R., 41.

If the battle of Chickamauga displayed Thomas's quality in defensive action, Missionary Ridge showed his offensive ability in an equally high degree. The opening of this great action was delayed four days to enable Sherman's belated columns to reach the designated spot. On the 18th of November, orders had been issued "for attacking the enemy's position on Missionary Ridge by Saturday [the 21st] at daylight."<sup>1</sup> Thomas's duty was to "co-operate with Sherman," by having his troops well concentrated on his left flank, "toward the northern end of Missionary Ridge."<sup>2</sup> The brunt of the action was to be borne by Sherman. As he was still far in the rear, the execution of these orders was postponed. On the night of the 22d, a deserter from the enemy reported Bragg as retreating. Early on the morning of the 23d, Thomas was ordered "to ascertain at once the truth or falsity" of his story.<sup>3</sup> Under this order, he advanced with the two divisions of Wood and Sheridan, drove the enemy from Orchard Knob "in the most gallant style,"<sup>4</sup> and thus gained a commanding position, half way to the Ridge, which enabled him, after Sherman's repulse, on the 25th to carry the steep heights in his front. He showed his usual timeliness of action, by "having done on the 23d what," Grant says, "was intended for the 24th."<sup>5</sup> The truth or falsity of the deserter's story could easily have been ascertained by the reconnoissance of a single brigade, or less. It was the ample manner in which the preliminary work was done under his provident direction which secured the final triumph. It is generally represented that the battle was carried out exactly as planned by General Grant. Nothing could be more unjust either to Grant or Thomas than such representation. Grant's plan was most admirable and skilful. He meant to turn Bragg's right by sending Sherman's army against it, on the north end of the Ridge; and then, by rapidly following up his advantage, gain the whole Chicka-

<sup>1</sup> 55 W. R., 31.<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, 32, 41.<sup>4</sup> *Ib.*, 32-33.<sup>5</sup> *Ib.*, 33.

mauga Valley, at Bragg's rear, and so cut off his retreat. The work assigned to Thomas was to hold Bragg's centre, along the summit of the Ridge. General Thomas, in his report, modestly says: "The original plan of operations was somewhat modified to meet and take the best advantage of emergencies, which necessitated material modifications of the plan. It is believed, however, that the original plan, had it been carried out, could not possibly have led to more successful results."<sup>1</sup> It could hardly have led to a more decisive victory; but if Sherman and Hooker had succeeded, as Grant meant they should, in gaining Bragg's rear, the results might have been more successful, since the greater part of Bragg's army might thus have been captured. Grant never meant, and never ordered, an assault upon Missionary Ridge by the Army of the Cumberland.

On the morning of the 25th of November, four days later than Grant had planned for, General Sherman was lying with his troops across the north end of Missionary Ridge. His whole command, four divisions and a brigade, numbered 24,915 men. With these at his call, he made an unsuccessful assault upon the rebel lines, manned by 18,200 men. His losses amounted to 202 killed, 1,094 wounded, 288 missing; a total of 1,584. The rebel loss in his front was 142 killed, 952 wounded, 216 prisoners; a total of 1,310. The force with which, in the afternoon, Thomas assaulted the face of the Ridge, amounted to 24,536 men. Opposed to him, in their fortified works on the summit, and in the double line of rifle-pits at the foot and half way up the Ridge, were 19,333 men. The rebel loss in this successful assault was 221 killed, 1,228 wounded, 3,920 prisoners; a total of 5,369. The Union loss was 416 killed, 2,834 wounded, 20 missing; a total of 3,270. It was the work of one hour and five minutes from the firing of the signal guns. Sherman's loss, killed and wounded, was less than seven per cent.; Thomas's

<sup>1</sup> 55 W. R., 96, 97.

more than thirteen per cent. of the forces engaged. The rebel loss, killed and wounded, in Sherman's front, was six per cent. ; in Thomas's, eight per cent. of the forces engaged. Both Grant and Sherman represent that the lines in front of Thomas were weakened, to enable the rebels to mass against Sherman. This assertion is clearly disproved by the official records, which locate every part and movement of the rebel forces. The troops that operated against Sherman were those which, the day and night before, evacuated Lookout Mountain, and those which had been in Chickamauga and Chattanooga valleys. The forces on Missionary Ridge, in front of Thomas, was not weakened by a single man during the three days of preparation and combat, except as they were killed, wounded or captured by Thomas. In his movement against the north end of the Ridge, Sherman had more men under his command than Thomas had for his movement; and to Sherman was assigned the task of making the successful assault. The number of men he had to encounter was less than that which confronted Thomas. General Bragg, in his report, says the position carried by the Army of the Cumberland "was one which ought to have been held by a line of skirmishers against any assaulting column."<sup>1</sup>

The charge by the Army of the Cumberland up the steep slope of Missionary Ridge was, indeed, unordered and unexpected by the commanding general. The men themselves began it by an uncontrollable impulse. In that respect it was not the work of any general. But if those men had been trained under a general of less heroic mould, would they have undertaken, or executed, an enterprise so hazardous as to be almost impossible? It was the confident spirit with which General Thomas had inspired them which made the impulse unconquerable and the action successful. To quote Mr. Dana again: "The storming of the Ridge by our troops was one of the greatest miracles in military history.

<sup>1</sup> 55 W. R., 666.

. . . Neither Grant nor Thomas intended it. . . . The unaccountable spirit of the troops bore them bodily up those impracticable steeps, over the bristling rifle-pits on the crest, and the thirty cannon enfilading every gully. . . . The generals caught the inspiration of the men, and were ready themselves to undertake impossibilities.”<sup>1</sup> Even while the shouts of victory were still filling the air, the shrill whistle of the first steamboat, loaded with supplies, coming up the reopened river, told the story of future plenty, after the long starvation; and added another proof, if one were needed, to the willing minds of his enthusiastic soldiers, that their commander could feed as well as fight them. It was the final test alike of his greatness in battle and his providence in the care of them.

When, on the 3d of March, 1864, Grant was made Lieutenant-General, it was natural that he should secure the assignment of Sherman as his successor in the command of the Military Division of the Mississippi. Thus Thomas was again placed under command, not merely of his junior in rank, but of one who had served under him during the advance on Corinth. But he entered as heartily upon the work of the new campaign as though he himself were commanding general. The Confederate Army, now under General Joseph E. Johnston, lay at Dalton, thirty miles southeast of Chattanooga.

On the 28th of February, Thomas submitted to General Grant, then commanding the Military Division, a proposition based on a reconnoissance from which he had just returned, for a movement with his own army against the enemy, which, he believed, would overcome all opposition as far, at least, as Atlanta.<sup>2</sup> His first move, in the plan he submitted, was identical with that afterward unsuccessfully attempted by General Sherman: that is, to hold Johnston at Dalton

<sup>1</sup> 55 W. R., 69.

<sup>2</sup> 58 W. R., 489; C. W. 1 Sup., Thomas's Report, 197, 201-202.

by a demonstration at Buzzard Roost, and by a rapid and secret movement through Snake Creek Gap, with the bulk of his army, seize Resaca, cut the rebel communications and then overthrow the enemy. That such a movement would have been successful, nobody who carefully studies the physical features of the country and the situation of things at the time can doubt. Polk's corps and a division from Mississippi had not yet joined Johnston, and would have been entirely cut off from making the junction. Sherman borrowed this plan, but bungled in carrying it out. Instead of throwing the bulk of his army through the Gap upon Resaca as Thomas intended, he held most of it about Buzzard Roost, and along the inaccessible palisades to its right and left. Then he sent less than a quarter part through the Gap. This quarter, under McPherson, finding the task more hazardous and of greater magnitude than had been anticipated, instead of seizing Resaca returned to the Gap, fortified it, and waited for re-enforcements. The whole scheme was thus revealed to Johnston, who, finding the road still open, prudently and safely withdrew. A bloody and indecisive battle of two days followed, and Johnston again withdrew without loss of men or material except such as were destroyed in the fight. Had General Thomas's scheme been properly carried out, Johnston's army ought, by every rule of warfare, to have been entirely cut off from its base, and scattered in disorder through the inhospitable mountains of northern Georgia and the western Carolinas, within one week after the opening of the campaign. Sherman's obstinate determination to gain for his own old and smaller army all the glory of the anticipated triumph, alone prevented the consummation of so decisive a result. Of the combined aggregate of 100,000 men under his command, McPherson had 25,000 and Schofield 14,000; while Thomas had 61,000,—nearly two thirds of the whole. Yet each of these separate armies was treated as on the same footing, though when hard work was to be done

the figures show that most of it fell on Thomas. His loss in killed and wounded during the campaign, prudent and saving of life as he always was, amounted to thirty-two per cent. of his original force; while McPherson's was twenty-six per cent., and Schofield's less than sixteen.

The only successful assault made upon the enemy's lines was by Thomas's old corps, — the Fourteenth, — at the battle of Jonesborough, on the 1st of September, resulting in the utter rout of the rebels, and the capture of Govan's brigade. That night Atlanta was abandoned, and the next morning the city was surrendered to the Twentieth Corps. The great campaign ended, as that of Halleck against Corinth more than two years before had ended, with the occupation of the abandoned city. But there was no diminution of courage or enterprise in the rebel army. During this campaign, General Thomas's army participated in all the battles, except that of the 22d of July, in which McPherson was killed. From all share in this it was withheld by General Sherman, on the expressed ground that "if any assistance were rendered by either of the other armies, the Army of the Tennessee would be jealous."<sup>1</sup> All day long, the Army of the Cumberland, under Thomas, lay within hearing of that desperate encounter, and in sight of its smoke, — close to the fortifications of Atlanta, held mainly by Georgia militia, — longing and wondering for the word which should send them over the works, and through the beleaguered city, upon the rear of the force so vehemently assailing the Tennessee army under Logan. The word never came. The enemy withdrew into the city, which they held for six weeks longer. The Army of the Tennessee was spared the infliction of that pang, which, to General Sherman's fancy, could not be assuaged even by the capture of the town, or the overthrow of the enemy.

General Thomas, on this campaign, shared with the other

<sup>1</sup> 2 Sherman's Memoirs, 82.

commanders in the battle of Resaca, the assault on Kenesaw, and the engagements of Ezra Church and Jonesborough. At New Hope Church, Pickett's Mill, Kolb's Farm, Marietta, Vining's Station and Peach Tree Creek, his army fought unaided. At Peach Tree Creek, on the 20th of July, Hood signalized his assumption of command by a most determined and persistent attack upon a part of Thomas's force, while in the act of crossing the Creek. The assault was made substantially by the same force that, two days later, fell upon McPherson. It was even more signally repulsed. The attack fell mainly upon five divisions, — three of the Twentieth Corps, and one each of the Fourth and Fourteenth. General Thomas was at the very front when the assault began. He aided personally in arranging the lines and placing the guns. Hood never fought with greater desperation, or was more decisively repulsed. The Union loss was over 1,800; that of the rebels was estimated at 7,000. To this most spirited engagement, in which as many men were engaged as in that of July 22d, and the results of which were equally important, General Sherman makes only the faintest allusion in his report. In his *Memoirs*, he dismisses it with about the same number of lines as he gives pages to the latter, — in which the Union loss was less than 2,000, and the rebel loss estimated at 10,000. It is hardly to be wondered at, that, with such historians, General Thomas has failed to receive just recognition. The publication of the *Official Records* will alone afford means of learning the truth. Meantime, a whole generation has grown up, whose chief sources of information about the great events in which he bore so leading a part are the partial and imperfect accounts given by Grant and Sherman; Grant, misled by those to whom he entrusted the collection and arrangement of the records; Sherman, by his own prejudice, and his amazing indifference to historic truthfulness.

Soon after the occupancy of Atlanta by the Union forces,



General Thomas proposed to General Sherman to take his army and march to the sea.<sup>1</sup> This suggestion was declined, as that for the movement through Snake Creek Gap in the early spring had been. Instead, on the 29th of September, Thomas was sent back to Tennessee, with only two divisions of infantry, to oversee the petty task of expelling the guerrilla band of Forrest, who was playing havoc in that State. The work was speedily accomplished, and General Thomas prepared to return to Atlanta, where he had left his personal effects, his headquarters and most of his staff. But when Sherman finally determined to lead the army to the sea himself, he ordered Thomas to remain in the rear, — soon to become the only front of battle. Selecting for his own use the two largest of Thomas's corps, numbering about 30,000 infantry, and all his mounted cavalry, more than 5,000, Sherman left, to defend Tennessee, his two weakest corps, — together numbering about 22,000 infantry with 4,000 dismounted cavalry. These two corps were of separate armies, and had never operated together, except that each had served on the Atlanta campaign. How, at last, with a noble remnant of the Sixteenth Corps, under A. J. Smith, and the newly organized and remounted cavalry, under General Wilson, he welded them all, in an incredibly short time, into a powerful and homogeneous army, and at Nashville destroyed the force which Sherman with nearly three times the number had failed to overthrow, has before been told.<sup>2</sup>

This battle of Nashville was the last, as the battle of Mill Spring was the first, of the great victories in the southwest. In each, General Thomas was in chief command. The plan and execution of both were his. As they were the only battles for which he alone bore the sole responsibility, his chief claim to generalship must rest upon them. Without going

<sup>1</sup> Van Horne's *Life of Thomas*, 255.

<sup>2</sup> Colonel Stone's accounts of the battles of Franklin and Nashville will be published in this series of Papers of the Military Historical Society. — EDITOR.

into a detailed analysis, it is enough to say that, in each, he annihilated his opponent. In the first, he was considerably outnumbered; in the last, his own slight superiority in numbers was more than offset by the strongly fortified position of the enemy. In the first he changed his tactics, at the critical moment, from defensive to offensive, with striking success; in the last, he was on the offensive from beginning to end. The impression that the enemy did not fight with spirit and determination at Nashville is not sustained by the facts. It is true, the loss of life was less than in many other battles not so persistently fought. This argues the greater skill on his part, in the planning and execution of the work, so as to produce decisive results with comparatively little bloodshed. The capture of over 10,000 prisoners, — nearly one-third the enemy's whole force, — with seventy-two guns, is, I think, unprecedented during the War of the Rebellion, in an open field fight, between nearly equal numbers, and where the enemy had command of more than one line of retreat. The captures at Fort Donelson and Vicksburg were of fortified places, so completely invested that escape was impossible. Not even Sheridan, in the Valley or at Five Forks, won a more overwhelming victory than Thomas at Nashville, or showed greater energy and vigor in assault or pursuit; and the preponderance of numbers was decidedly greater in Sheridan's case.

It is true, Thomas did not completely cut off Hood after the battle, as Grant did Lee after Petersburg. But all the circumstances were widely different. When Grant's pursuit began, he certainly outnumbered the enemy more than two to one; and a large part of his force was already well advanced beyond Lee's right flank. He had choice of several roads parallel to the enemy's line of retreat; whatever streams he had to cross were fordable, and it was warm and bright spring weather. Thomas, on the contrary, had but a single line of pursuit, which the enemy had already desolated; he

had at least two formidable streams to cross before reaching the Tennessee River. It was midwinter and the weather was freezing cold; his pursuing force was scarcely superior to that of the enemy in numbers, and his pontoniers were untrained and soon became benumbed in the icy streams. Besides that, his most promising plan for the capture of Hood's army came to nought, through causes entirely beyond his control. He had sent by rail immediately after the battle, through Stevenson and Decatur, a sufficient force under General Steedman, his most energetic division commander, to occupy the south bank of the Tennessee to confront Hood as he should cross, and compel his surrender. To the success of such a scheme every hour was vital; and if, by an appearance of dilatoriness in immediate pursuit, he could persuade Hood to delay a little, the chances of Steedman's success would be greatly increased. Steedman was detained at Murfreesboro', through what he denounced as "the criminal negligence, incompetency and indifference of a portion of the railroad employés,"<sup>1</sup> nearly forty-eight hours. On the 27th his whole force was across the river, within striking distance of Hood's place of crossing, but it was just too late. The main rebel army was already over, and the rear guard crossed that night and made good its escape. Steedman's small cavalry force overtook the trains, and on the 31st of December destroyed over 300 wagons and 78 pontoon boats, besides capturing many prisoners. But for the unaccountable delay at Murfreesboro', there is every reason to believe that Hood would have been compelled to surrender his whole force, one hundred and twenty-five miles from the battlefield, ten days after the fight.

The head of Thomas's pursuing column was at the Tennessee River on the morning of December 28, having made that distance in eleven days, with fighting every day, through the very worst winter weather. In the pursuit from

<sup>1</sup> 93 W. R., 506.

Petersburg to Appomattox, the head of Grant's army led by the tireless Sheridan also fought every day, and marched seventy-five miles in seven days. The world is justly full of praise and wonder at the extraordinary energy shown in that relentless pursuit. Yet Thomas's pursuit was more rapid, the natural obstacles to be overcome far greater than any Grant encountered, and the resistance offered by Hood fully equal to that made by Lee. The losses in each case tell that part of the story. From the 29th of March till Lee's surrender, Grant lost a little less than 10,000 men, about nine per cent. of the number actually engaged. The loss in Thomas's army from the 15th to the 28th of December was about 5,000, over twelve per cent. of the number actually engaged. These facts speak for themselves, and suggest their own moral.

The battle of Nashville was also the first in the West, if not the first during the war, in which cavalry was used like infantry in assaulting fortified lines. Under Sherman, on the Atlanta campaign, the cavalry was not only made insignificant, it was treated with every species of indignity; still, as in its earliest days, it was a by-word. Numbering at the outset over 12,000 well-mounted men, under able and energetic commanders like Garrard and McCook and Stoneman and Minty and La Grange, it would be difficult to discover that it accomplished anything commensurate with its numbers and capability. To the extent of his capacity, Sherman minimized its fighting qualities. In almost every enterprise it undertook, it found itself outnumbered and was badly worsted. Yet less than half these same men, re-enforced by Hatch's admirable division from Mississippi and some new regiments from Indiana, recruited to full ranks, remounted, concentrated, encouraged and properly handled, performed the arduous duty of retarding Hood's advance; then, under Wilson, at the battle of Franklin defeated Forrest; at the battle of Nashville vied with the

infantry in daring and success; and led the pursuit of Hood's retreating columns with unsurpassed energy and endurance. In the use to which he so successfully put this important arm of the service, Thomas gave another proof of that quickness and versatility of mind which is one of the marks of a great captain.

One secret, not only of Thomas's unvarying success, but of his wonderful hold upon the confidence and affection of his army, is the fact that every one in it was, to him, a man and a soldier. He did not show his appreciation of their good conduct by many words of praise; but he showed in every way that he always expected the highest results. To secure such results, he devoted himself with unceasing application. Thus he was unremitting in his care that they should be well supplied, well looked after and always brought to the right place at the right time. His mind was always vigorous, alert, quick to perceive, to decide, to act. His personal movements were generally very deliberate,—chiefly because he was a constant sufferer, and hasty or violent exertion produced acute pain. He never mounted his horse without a wrench, and it was almost agony to ride fast. He never spoke of his sufferings, and it is only since his death that I learned of them. "I have educated myself not to feel," he once said, rather sadly, to an intimate friend. But, with all this deliberativeness of movement, on a march or a campaign, he saw every part of his army every day. On the Atlanta campaign especially, when every day brought at least a skirmish, he invariably made his way along to the head of the column. If, when he was at the rear, the sounds indicated contact with the enemy, he pushed on to the very front, where he often dismounted and walked to the outer skirmish line, to reconnoitre. Only in this way, in that obscure country, could any idea be obtained of the position of the enemy and of his own troops. It was a constant fight in the dark; but his wood-craft was almost unerring. He could make his way

through the thickest forest, and come out at the spot he aimed for. When under fire his movements, whether on foot or mounted, were as deliberate as at any other time. If not indifferent to danger, he was never influenced by a sense of it. He seemed unconscious of fear; his manner in the heat of battle was the same as at any other time — always imperturbable, resolute, self-possessed, unhurried. In the crisis of an engagement he was like the great surgeon, who, in a capital operation, said he had not time enough to be in a hurry. He was never seen riding up and down his lines, waving his sword, shouting, or going through any of those ceremonies which constitute the picturesque part of generalship. Not thus did he command the absolute confidence and obedience of his devoted soldiers. But whenever and wherever they saw him, they knew that all was right, and they read in his fixed countenance the resolve that was always the harbinger of victory. So, also, on the march nobody ever saw him, with an escort trailing behind him, dashing past a moving column of troops, throwing up dust or mud, and compelling them to leave the road to him. If anybody had the right of way it was they, not he. He would break through the woods, or flounder across a swamp, rather than force his men from the road, and so wear them out by needless fatigue. No detail escaped him, however apparently insignificant. "The fate of a battle may depend on a buckle," he once said to a battery commander who had carelessly allowed his harness to break.

He sometimes had terrific outbursts of temper. It was usually under complete control, but when it did break out it was volcanic. He once so alarmed a teamster who, when his mules were stalled, was beating them over the head with the butt of his whip, that the poor fellow took to the woods to escape he knew not what fate. Again, when the servants and orderlies about his headquarters were chasing a stray goose and making a great shouting and disturbance, he

flamed out so that everybody ran and hid from his wrath ; while the poor goose, after a short circling flight, lighted at his feet as if for protection and safety. And, indeed, to all dumb animals he was a friend and protector ; stray dogs and homeless cats, no less than horses, found with him a refuge. It was exhibitions of meanness or cruelty to those who could not defend themselves, rather than any great faults or crimes, which chiefly stirred his passion. The violation of a flag of truce under which some of the escort were robbed of overcoats and blankets, and Bragg's failure to render proper return, led him to such vehemence of language as even treason to the flag did not call forth. But such outbursts were very infrequent, only often enough to show that it would not do to trifle. Habitually, he was the gentlest and kindest of men ; thoughtful of others, considerate to all, approachable, with no affected dignity, and entirely free from every sort either of obsequiousness or patronage. He had great fondness for light humor and pleasantry, and liked as he sat by the camp fire to hear the droll anecdotes and adventures of his soldiers. He was never idle ; when not engaged in necessary active duty, he liked to occupy himself with some mechanical work, for which he had great fondness and aptitude, or with the study of science, history or philosophy. He was not an omnivorous reader, was rather given to reflection than acquisition. Besides the literature and science of his own profession, with which he was thoroughly acquainted, he was well versed in constitutional law, or rather, perhaps, in the Constitution itself, which he studied and thought upon continually with all diligence. It was his political Bible, which he accepted unquestioningly, and maintained manfully.

Born in a slave State, and passing nearly all his life in slave-holding communities, he never liked the institution. Among his early experiences were the horrors of the Nat Turner insurrection, which took place in his native county. His only personal relation to slavery was the purchase of

one or two servants, when so situated that he could not do otherwise. But he never sold them, and afterwards gave them their freedom at great trouble and expense to himself. His keen sense of justice revolted against the crime of unrewarded labor. When the enlistment of colored men as soldiers was authorized, he heartily aided the scheme, and always gave the colored troops their due share of work and of credit.

He easily commanded men, rather by inherent force of character than by arbitrary rule, so that his troops always tried to do their best as much for his sake as their own. An extraordinary illustration of his power over men was given at the Reunion of the Western Armies at Chicago, in December, 1868. It was just after Grant's election to the Presidency, and there was assembled there the largest collection of officers gathered together since the close of the war. At the great banquet in the immense hall of the Chamber of Commerce, more than two thousand men were seated at the tables, and the wine flowed freely. By the time the speaking began, the hubbub and turmoil were indescribable and apparently uncontrollable. Sherman presided; Terry and Schofield and Slocum and Hurlbut and Logan and Oglesby and Schurz, all practised orators, attempted to speak; with most, it was mere dumb pantomime; with others, it was merely the handing of manuscripts to the reporters. Thomas alone, out of all the number, secured a quiet and listening attention from beginning to end. It was a spontaneous and almost unconscious tribute to his commanding bearing and character.

He had also the rare faculty of concentrating his whole attention upon the subject before him, hence all business was quickly disposed of. Colonel Thruston, Judge-Advocate on his staff, writes: "It was a matter of surprise to me to find how remarkably familiar and accomplished he was with all matters of military law and precedent. . . . During two



years in the judge-advocate's department, I devoted almost my entire time to fitting myself for the duties of my position, sending to Europe for books, and reading everything pertaining to military law and that branch of the service. Yet, in the consideration of questions of law, the General was always ready with useful suggestions and counsel, and seemed to have given more consideration to these subjects than any other officer of his army. During his earlier days he had made a careful study of court-martial law and had prepared notes of decisions, showing how painstaking he was in making himself master of all departments of his profession." The same thing might be said of him in regard to the adjutant-general's department, although he seemed to attach less importance to that than to some other branches of the service. He made it a rule, also, to finish up all his work to the minutest detail before any important movement was begun. Wherever his signature was required, even if it were only in a copy-book, he invariably signed his name himself. On a campaign, he required that all necessary documents and papers should be completed every day; and his adjutant-general's wagon was a model of convenience and utility.

All his personal habits marked him as a gentleman of refinement and self-control. He was extremely neat in dress and person, and free from every kind of offensiveness of speech or manner. He hated vulgarity and loudness and pretension. While not a puritan, certainly not of the type Macaulay describes, but a lover of all manly sports and exercises, with great enjoyment of jollity and good fellowship in others, he was himself abstemious and moderate in all things. He drank less whiskey than any officer I knew in the service who drank any at all, never taking it to while away an idle hour or for mere companionship, but only when tired or exhausted. Yet he always produced it when visited, and kept a staff officer who was an expert in mixing toddies. He never smoked; his private life was as pure and stainless

as a saint's; he lived always in the full light of day, with no secrets to hide and no habits of which to be ashamed. He was a strong, rugged, vigorous, complete, well-rounded man, physically, mentally and morally.

No portrait that I have ever seen of General Thomas begins to do justice to the manly strength and comeliness of his form and face. In any assembly, he would be noticeable for the grace and easy dignity of his bearing, as well as for his countenance, marked by clear intelligence, and a winning smile which lighted up all his features. His brow was very heavy and projecting, and so overshadowed his eyes, — which, as General Garfield well says, “were cold gray to his enemies, but warm deep blue to his friends,” — that, in sitting for a photograph, their light and expression were almost wholly lost. Such pictures wear a grim and almost forbidding look, entirely at variance with his ordinary, every-day appearance. But, at all times, one could read in his every look the story of resistless strength, which neither time nor fate could overcome. His whole appearance expressed unconquerable power, as gentle but ineradicable as one of the elemental forces. His voice was singularly pleasant and attractive, and all gladly listened to its musical tones. His inherent dignity forbade undue familiarity; but with the members of his personal and military family, there was unbounded freedom of intercourse. The men in the ranks never hesitated to seek him out if they wanted anything, and were sure to receive considerate attention. He once went on the bail-bond of one of his old soldiers, whom he knew only as a sentinel about his headquarters, when sued for a debt for which another was responsible, walking down to the magistrate's with him as if it were the natural thing for a major-general to do.

In the everlasting search for an available candidate for the Presidency which marks our politics, it was inevitable that a man of such mark and character should be one of the

possible selections. Throughout the Southwest, where the men who had served under him were in the majority, he was unquestionably the favorite in 1868. In Ohio and Tennessee, especially, strong organizations were formed to secure his nomination, and they felt sanguine of success. Silent acquiescence on his part was all they asked. But that was precisely what they failed to secure. Not only did he refuse that, but he enjoined, as a personal obligation upon his friends, that they should see to it that his name should not be brought forward. "I have learned the trade of a soldier," he said, "and I am too old to learn another." A letter of his written in March, 1867, so well reveals his feelings and character that I quote nearly all of it:—

"There are many reasons why I cannot consent to be a candidate for the Presidency.

"First: I am wholly disqualified for so high and responsible a position, being but a mere tyro in the science of statesmanship.

"Second: I have not the necessary control over my temper, nor have I the faculty of conforming to a policy and working to advance it, unless convinced within myself that it is right and honest.

"Third: My habits of life, established by a military training of over twenty-five years, are such as to make it repugnant to my self-respect to have to induce people to do their duty by persuasive measures. If there is anything that enrages me more than another, it is to see an obstinate and self-willed man oppose what is right, morally and legally, simply because under the law he cannot be compelled to do what is right.

"Fourth: I can never consent, voluntarily, to place myself in a position where scurrilous newspaper men and political demagogues can make free with my personal character and reputation, with impunity.

"Fifth: I have no taste whatever for politics. Besides,

restrictions have recently been thrown around the President, by Congress, which virtually deprive him of his just powers and rights under the Constitution. I could never consent to be President so long as that officer is deprived of the exercise of all the rights, privileges and duties guaranteed to him by the Constitution.

“I could name many more equally valid reasons for not wishing the office. I will name only one more, and that not the least; I am poor and cannot afford it. . . . I therefore sincerely hope that I may not be compelled to decline in a more formal manner, which, if nominated, I shall certainly do.”

It is needless to say that several such letters as this, written about the same time, to influential people in various places, produced the desired result. There was no mistaking their meaning or sincerity. Yet he underrated his qualifications. In the chaotic condition of things throughout Tennessee and the other states under his command during the critical period of reconstruction, where he exercised autocratic power, an infinite number and variety of questions came up for adjudication; and his orders always were based on broad grounds of law and justice. His testimony before the Reconstruction Committee in 1866 clearly shows his fairness and impartiality. One looks in vain for any trace of bitterness or hostility toward the people of the South, though of all men living, he might be pardoned for entertaining and expressing such feeling. This judicial habit of mind also raised him above all political considerations in his dealing with men and events. He never was swayed in the slightest by any thought as to the influence his action might have upon his own personal fortunes. Indeed, he more than once, by his insistence on what he deemed right and just, stood in the way of his own advancement. A notable instance of this is his conduct, when Andrew Johnson, in February, 1868, nominated him to be Lieutenant-General and General by

brevet. Undoubtedly Johnson's purpose was to assign Thomas to duty according to his brevet rank, and so supersede Grant by him. To many men, perhaps to most men, this would have proved a great temptation, especially if one felt as Thomas did, that Grant had treated him unjustly. How it affected him is shown by his letter to the President of the Senate, in which he says : —

“For the battle of Nashville, I was appointed a Major-General in the United States Army. My services since the war do not merit so high a compliment; and it is too late to be regarded as a compliment, if conferred for services during the war.

“I therefore earnestly request that the Senate will not confirm the nomination.”

At the same time he wrote the President a similar letter, requesting him to recall the nomination. So ended this mischievous attempt to seduce General Thomas and to degrade General Grant.

In the great work of giving a faithful record of the career of the graduates of the Military Academy, which General Cullum has performed with such fulness and impartiality, there are but two officers named whose record of service equals, in length, that of General Thomas, and these are both in the Engineer Corps. Neither Grant, nor Sherman, nor Sheridan can boast of such an amount and variety of duty. He took part in more than thirty actions, and every one of them added to his skill and experience, as well as to the confidence with which his soldiers always regarded him. He captured more guns in single battles on the open field than any of the other commanders during the war: 40 at Missionary Ridge, 50 at Nashville, 25 on the pursuit after that battle. If he ever lost a gun, he made the account good by the capture of a corresponding number in the same engagement. In all, he took in the open field 183 guns, over 25,000 prisoners and over 15,000 deserters. Nearly

one half of the regiments and batteries which served under him veteranized during the winter of 1863-64.

If Sheridan had never commanded in any other battles than Booneville and Five Forks, — the first and the last of the battles of his own planning, — and, in all his intermediate career, had fought under the eye and direction of a superior, he would still be recognized as a great general, all whose actions bear the stamp of his peculiar military genius. Some illustration might, indeed, be lacking to demonstrate the variety and extent of his powers. But from what is seen of his independent character in those two striking examples, all his other qualities may be naturally inferred. If Sherman had never been in chief command, except on his unavailing enterprise against Vicksburg in December, 1862, and his almost fatal over-confidence at Bentonville in 1865, — the first and the last of his independent actions, — we should still have ample testimony to his failure to inflict any very serious loss upon the enemy, and to his unbroken habit of fighting by detachments and without decisive results; while, at the same time, we could not fail to recognize the wonderful skill with which he could march, supply and handle an army everywhere except upon the battlefield. In the same manner, Mill Spring and Nashville — the first and the last battles of Thomas's planning and execution — reveal the quality of his genius, and show us by their completeness the possession of abilities which go to make up a great captain. Lacking perhaps, certainly never showing the audacity which sometimes helped Cæsar and Napoleon to win, almost contrary to fortune; yet, in all the important elements requisite for a true soldier of the republic, nothing seems lacking, — neither native ability, nor industry, nor character, nor patience, nor skill, nor readiness in emergencies, nor courage, nor self-reliance, nor unflinching success, nor unswerving fidelity to the highest calls of duty. What Napier says of the Duke of Wellington may as fitly be said of Thomas: "He held his

army in hand, keeping it with unmitigated labor always in a fit state to march or to fight, and thus prepared, he acted indifferently as occasion offered, on the offensive or defensive, displaying in both a complete mastery of his art."

To quote Napier again, in summing up the attributes of a great captain: "The certain mark of a master spirit in war is that most rare faculty of coming to prompt and sure conclusions on sudden emergencies. Without this, a commander may be distinguished, he may be a great man, but he cannot be a great captain." Numerous instances show that Thomas had this essential faculty in a very high degree. His exhibition of it at Mill Spring has already been noticed; how, at the critical moment, he changed from defensive to offensive, and so won a complete victory. At Stone's River, while generally on the defensive, yet his sending forward a brigade into the Cedars, to check the column that was overwhelming Sheridan till the latter could establish and maintain a new and firm line, saved the centre from being crushed, and so kept a salient toward the enemy which could not be carried. At Chickamauga, he brought on the battle by sending forward a division to cut off a brigade, erroneously reported as detached from all support; when he found that he had confronted a formidable line of battle, marching to turn his own left, he instantly brought his other divisions into line and into action to meet the unexpected emergency, and held his own throughout the day, against all odds, so that the enemy utterly failed to secure the prize so ardently coveted. Late in the afternoon of the second day, when ordered to retire to Rossville, he carried out the hazardous undertaking by a display of audacity hardly found in any other of his actions. Having given orders how each division was to be withdrawn, he placed himself at the head of one of them, and, by a terrific charge in column, broke through the opposing line, and then, sweeping around its rear, gathered in guns and hundreds of prisoners. Under

cover of this most daring attack, the rest of the army was withdrawn, in comparative ease and safety, from the very presence of and contact with the enemy. His ample provision on the 23d of November, 1863, by which, unordered, he carried and held the decisive position on Orchard Knob, and so made victory possible and complete, has been mentioned. At Little Kenesaw, on the 18th of June, 1864, he gained, by a spirited assault, a commanding point which compelled Johnston to fall back to the main mountain. His conduct at Peach Tree Creek and Jonesborough, already referred to, reveal the same quality of an instantaneous grasping of the situation, and of corresponding promptness of action.

Few officers during the War of the Rebellion received more of formal, official praise, real and sincere, but bringing no access of power or opportunity, than he. The legislature of Ohio thanked him, after the battle of Mill Spring; the Congress of the United States thanked him for Hood's signal defeat at Nashville; the State of Tennessee thanked him, had his portrait painted, and presented him a magnificent gold medal; the Secretary of War, sending him notice on Christmas Eve, 1864, of his appointment as Major-General, declared: "No commander has more justly earned promotion by devoted, disinterested and valuable service to his country."<sup>1</sup> Yet his military reward, after it all, consisted in dividing up his army, and scattering its fractions, under subordinate commanders, to all points of the compass to reap independent honors.

General Grant, in his *Memoirs*, gives an estimate of Thomas's character based on very imperfect knowledge, though exceedingly just as far it goes. He says: "Thomas's dispositions were deliberately made, and always good. He could not be driven from a point he was given to hold. I do not believe," he adds, "that he could ever have conducted Sherman's army from Chattanooga to Atlanta against the

<sup>1</sup> 94 W. R., 329.



defences and the commander guarding that line, in 1864. On the other hand, if it had been given him to hold the line which Johnston tried to hold, neither that General, nor Sherman, nor any other officer could have done it better.”<sup>1</sup> This is very high praise, and goes as far as Grant’s acquaintance with Thomas fairly justifies. But there are multitudes of soldiers who believe they knew Thomas better than Grant did, and who believe that he would not, indeed, have conducted that campaign as Sherman did; but that if the conduct of it had been in Thomas’s hands, the results would have been something vastly different from the barren occupation of an abandoned city, at the end of four months’ incessant fighting which left the enemy relatively as strong and defiant as at the beginning. The battle of Nashville is, after all, that on which the fame of General Thomas must ultimately depend. Though reckoned by Swinton as among the decisive battles of the war, it has not thus far commanded the study and attention its magnitude and importance deserve. Most of those who have thus far written our war history fail of apprehending its supreme consequence. Defeat at Nashville involved ruin to the national cause more complete and effectual than at any other point in the whole sphere of action. There was nowhere any available army to stem the tide, in case of disaster there. Thomas had to create the force which annihilated Hood. If, as is just, the measure of a soldier’s greatness and glory is to be computed by the magnitude of the evils from which his victory saves the nation, as well as by the positive benefits conferred, no one of our generals deserves higher rank or greater honor.

Popular attention has been, not unnaturally, concentrated chiefly on Grant and Sherman. The Titanic blows of the one, and the coruscating brilliancy of the other, have alternately astonished and dazzled men’s judgments and imaginations. But time, which is said to set all things even,

<sup>1</sup> Grant’s Memoirs, 255.

will at last restore, or reveal, the proper perspective. Then it will be seen that, next to the surrender at Appomattox, the one blow under which the Rebellion reeled and tottered to its fall was that delivered by Thomas at Nashville. When that battle ended, but a single army remained to vex the peace of the Republic. The gigantic Colossus which had so long bestrode the land henceforth had but one foot left to stand upon; the other had been crushed to pieces at Nashville.

GENERAL THOMAS IN THE RECORD.

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## GENERAL THOMAS IN THE RECORD.

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THE fame of General Thomas as a patriot and a soldier is established beyond question. It is not the lightest testimony to his power as a leader of men that his followers and admirers, not reconciled with the fortune which gave Grant and Sherman more extensive commands than his, or restricted his genius to the conduct of campaigns less important than theirs, ask the world, even at this late day, to revise its judgment of him. They do not admit that his military genius was less eminent in one direction than in another, and they insist that, abler than Sherman and the equal of Grant, he would have done as well as the latter and better than the former, if he had been given their opportunities. It would be a thankless and a profitless task to examine these contentions in a critical way, if they consisted of nothing more than an estimate of Thomas from the point of view of loyal friends; but because they have extended to a disparagement of Grant and Sherman, and to a denial of the received accounts of some of their greatest achievements, these contentions have become the proper subject of critical examination, in the interest of the truth of history. The same is true of the charge that, in the first days of the War of the Rebellion, Thomas failed to receive due recognition because he was a Virginian; that the reward to him and his officers for Mill Springs, the first important Union victory, was tardy and inadequate; that, later in the war, jealousy or want of appreciation in the authorities retarded the promotion he had earned; and that he was repeatedly passed over in the

assignment of inferior men to commands which should have been given to him. It has also been said that Thomas's reputation has suffered for want of biography and memoirs such as Grant's and Sherman's, but this leaves out of the account not only Van Horne's history of the Army of the Cumberland, which, written at the request of Thomas and from materials "mainly collected and supplied by him," was published in 1875,<sup>1</sup> the year in which Sherman's memoirs appeared and ten years before Grant's, but also Cist's History of the Army of the Cumberland.

It is the attempt of the present paper to test the assertions above recapitulated, by the evidence presented in the Records of the armies, published by the War Department, which must always hereafter be regarded as the fountain-head of our military history from 1861 to 1865. It will be well to state in the outset, that in the important matter of numbers the conclusions reached will often, perhaps always, be found to differ from what is commonly accepted as the fact. The men actually bearing arms were much fewer than those ordinarily counted in the strength of the army. Often the force actually on the battlefield embraced only infantry and artillery. Not infrequently whole brigades of infantry belonging to one army or the other were absent on detached duty, and always a considerable portion of the force reported as "present for duty" consisted of non-combatants, such as musicians, and those employed in the quartermaster, commissary and medical departments. The Confederates classed their fighting force by itself as the "effectives present," and usually the returns of this force excluded the officers and included only the men bearing muskets.

The writer's admiration for the military character and lofty spirit of General Thomas has not been diminished by his studies for this paper, and he shares the impatience with which those who followed Thomas in the field hear the

<sup>1</sup> Van Horne's Life of General Thomas was published in 1882.

suggestion that any other motive than patriotism and fealty of the highest type led him to draw his sword in the nation's cause. In this he followed the example of another Virginian, his illustrious friend General Scott, who, at the outbreak of the Rebellion, discharged his duty in supporting the government at the Capital, with a martial soul a world removed from the possibility of defection.

Coming now to the statements which are to be considered, we read that although Thomas "encountered and helped put to flight" Jackson's troops, July 2, 1861, at Falling Waters on Virginia soil,<sup>1</sup> soon afterwards his loyalty was suspected when there was question of his promotion at Washington, and we discover in the Record that it was not Thomas's but Abercrombie's brigade which put the Confederates to flight in that action. Thomas's infantry was not under fire. Thomas's loyalty was so far above suspicion that even before this action he had been promoted from Major to Colonel of the Second United States Cavalry, and afterwards he was made Brigadier-General of Volunteers in advance of Abercrombie, and was preceded in this rank by only three of the officers who were with him under Patterson in the Shenandoah Valley, — Porter, Stone and Morell. In November, Thomas was assigned by Buell to the command of the Union line in Kentucky, which extended from London to Columbia. The Confederates facing this line had pushed a force under Zollicoffer across the Cumberland in front of Mill Springs, and, December 29, Buell directed Thomas to move down on the left of this force and endeavor to cut it off from the river, while Schoepf's command at Somerset should attack it in front; and in communicating the order he wrote to Thomas as follows: "The result ought to be at least a severe blow to him or a hasty flight across the river. But to effect the former the movement should be made rapidly and secretly, and the blow should be vigorous and decided. There should be no

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, 173.

delay after you arrive.”<sup>1</sup> Thomas marched to Logan’s Cross Roads and there halted January 17, about ten miles from the enemy’s camp, to await the arrival of four of his regiments which were detained in the rear by bad roads. Crittenden, the Confederate commander at Mill Springs, on the same day got news of Thomas’s movement, and on the 18th sent two regiments across the river, thus raising the force there to eight regiments of infantry, three battalions of cavalry and twelve pieces of artillery,<sup>2</sup> reported as 4,000 strong, and, taking the resolution to attack Thomas before he could join with Schoepf or receive his belated regiments, marched at midnight and fell on Thomas’s advance at daylight. Thomas had seven regiments of infantry, one of cavalry and two batteries.<sup>3</sup> The numbers are not reported. They probably were a little less than the Confederates. As his advance retired before the enemy, Thomas ordered up the rest of his troops and a hot fight ensued, in which the enemy were put to flight with a loss of 533 to Thomas’s loss of 253.<sup>4</sup> We search the Record in vain for evidence to support the account which describes Thomas as turning a repulse into a defeat by changing from the defensive to the offensive, and ordering a charge when the enemy were shaken by the loss of their commander. Their commander, Crittenden, did not fall. Zollicoffer commanded one of the brigades. When he was killed only two regiments had been engaged, and afterwards the Confederates made a general advance. They were put to flight by a charge in flank, which McCook reported to Thomas that he made upon his own judgment.<sup>5</sup> The reports leave no doubt that Thomas here displayed the same traits which afterwards distinguished him in greater battles. He was undisturbed by the sudden and unexpected attack of the enemy, and he ordered his brigades forward and put them in action with calm and confident courage. Without doubt, he

<sup>1</sup> 7 W. R., 78.<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, 105.<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, 79-102.<sup>4</sup> *Ib.*, 82, 108.<sup>5</sup> *Ib.*, 94.



rode the field with that impressive bearing which so often lent courage and firmness to those who were with him in time of trial. It would seem that if, instead of halting on the 17th, he had called Schoepf with his 5,000 men<sup>1</sup> down from Somerset (which was only eight miles from him and about twelve miles from the enemy), and had moved on the enemy that night with as great celerity as they moved on him the next night, he would have caught them with a force much smaller than his own, and would have had a fair chance of capturing or destroying all of them. The inquiry also arises, whether his march was as rapid as it might have been. His force spent seventeen days in making the distance of about sixty-five miles between Lebanon and Logan's Cross Roads, although speed was repeatedly urged by Buell.<sup>2</sup> The weather and roads were very bad; but between the 14th and 17th of the same month, McClelland marched a column of 4,000 infantry seventy-five miles in Western Kentucky in the same inclement weather.<sup>3</sup>

Although the loss of the enemy in the battle was small, the victory at Logan's Cross Roads gave great encouragement to loyalty in Kentucky; and so welcome was it at Washington that four of Thomas's colonels commended by Buell<sup>4</sup> were made brigadiers; and Thomas's appointment as Major-General in April, 1862, in advance of forty-two of the fifty-five brigadiers senior to him, including Sherman, although urged by Halleck for his immediate purpose,<sup>5</sup> must have been made in recognition of his leadership in this battle, for he had fought no other. Halleck desired his promotion in order that in reorganizing the army after Shiloh for the advance on Corinth, he might place Thomas in command of the right wing. It has been said that in doing this he caused Thomas to supersede Grant, and that it was "a slight Grant never forgot;"<sup>6</sup> but the right wing was newly created by this order,

<sup>1</sup> 7 W. R., 484, 485.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, 82, 530, 549, 558.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, 68-70.

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.*, 77.

<sup>5</sup> 23 W. R., 663.

<sup>6</sup> 68 *Atlantic Monthly*, 509.

and only a portion of Grant's army was included in it.<sup>1</sup> Halleck at the same time made Grant "second in command" of the army, an anomalous position which proved very distasteful to Grant. There is no evidence that Grant was prejudiced against Thomas by these changes. His choice of Thomas in preference to Rosecrans in October, 1863, to command the army at Chattanooga, is evidence to the contrary.<sup>2</sup>

In passing it is to be said, that it seems that it was not, as has been asserted, at Thomas's request that he was afterwards relieved from his command of the right wing of Halleck's army. In his letter of October 30, 1862, to Halleck, he says: "As soon as the emergency was over, I was relieved and returned to the command of my old division. I went to my duties without a murmur, as I am neither ambitious nor have I any political aspirations."<sup>3</sup> The feeling betrayed by him in this letter heightens the great magnanimity of his act of September 30, in declining to supersede Buell in the command of the Army of the Ohio, on the ground that the latter ought to be allowed to carry out the plans which he had formed.<sup>4</sup> Buell, on his part, on the same day announced Thomas as second in command.<sup>5</sup> Perhaps the fact that he held this title when the battle of Perryville was fought, eight days later, prejudiced him at Washington when, after the battle, Rosecrans was preferred to him as Buell's successor.<sup>6</sup> But there is no evidence that Thomas was at fault in the battle, unless it was in retaining the nominal position of second in command without the opportunity to exercise authority commensurate with the title. The battle occurred in this wise: On October 7, Buell, moving with three corps to attack Bragg at Perryville, ordered Thomas to advance with Crittenden's corps and put it in order of battle

<sup>1</sup> 11 W. R., 144.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Grant's Memoirs, 18-19, 26; 53 W. R., 404; 55 W. R., 11.

<sup>3</sup> 23 W. R., 657.

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.*, 555.

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.*, 560.

<sup>6</sup> *Ib.*, 640.

on the right of the army, and then report for orders.<sup>1</sup> Buell apparently did not suspect that the enemy might attack, and being ill, and not intending to deliver his attack until the next day,<sup>2</sup> he was not with his advance, so that although Bragg attacked his left flank early in the day and gave vigorous battle for several hours, Buell did not learn that a battle was going on until late in the day, and Thomas, although he had heard the cannonading, was led to believe, by reports from Buell's and the next corps commander's headquarters, that there was no serious engagement, and being left without instructions from Buell, took no part in the battle. Bragg reported that he had 14,500 infantry and 1,500 cavalry.<sup>3</sup> Buell reported his force at 58,000.<sup>4</sup> The battle was a fierce one and the Confederates were repulsed with a loss to them of 3,396,<sup>5</sup> and to the Union army of 4,241.<sup>6</sup> Not one half of Buell's force was brought into action. It is not surprising that in casting about for a vigorous and capable leader to succeed Buell, the authorities at Washington at this time preferred Rosecrans, who a week before the battle of Perryville had routed the enemy at Corinth, inflicting a loss of 6,000, to a loss on his part of 3,310.<sup>7</sup>

Rosecrans, moving southward from Nashville to attack Bragg's army, encountered it near Murfreesboro', Tennessee, in the battle of Stone's River, December 31, 1862. We are told in one account of this battle that the right being "swept from the field, the left threatened with disaster," Thomas with two divisions "maintained his ground, beating back every assault," and "held fast the critical point;"<sup>8</sup> and in another account from the same loyal pen that "the whole right wing of the Union army was driven from the field, half of it in dire confusion," and that "on the action of Thomas's two divisions then depended the fate of the day;" that as

<sup>1</sup> 23 W. R., 558, 580.

<sup>2</sup> 22 W. R., 186, 187, 275, 276, 1025.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, 1092.

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.*, 1028.

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.*, 1112.

<sup>6</sup> *Ib.*, 1036.

<sup>7</sup> 24 W. R., 78, 126, 176, 332, 383, 384.

<sup>8</sup> 68 Atlantic Monthly, 510.

Sheridan was driven back "Thomas met the shock with unmoved firmness. He had sent forward a brigade to relieve the pressure upon Sheridan ; and, when this was also forced back, the rest of his line was ready and held its ground. . . . Alone of all the troops in line that morning, except the division that joined his left, he was unshaken by any assault, and continued to hold the ground he had chosen till the enemy, three days later, abandoned the field."<sup>1</sup> By the Record it appears that Rosecrans had 39,440, and Bragg had 38,635 infantry and artillery in action on the day in question.<sup>2</sup> Rosecrans drew up his army facing Stone's River, his right wing of three divisions under McCook, his centre of two divisions under Thomas, and his left of three divisions under Crittenden. Bragg's army was drawn up on the opposite side of Stone's River in line nearly parallel to the Union line but extending beyond the Union right flank. Each commander resolved to attack with his left wing. Early in the morning (December 31) Rosecrans advanced from his left, but before engagement could take place Bragg with his left attacked Rosecrans's right with great vigor, and turning the flank of Johnson's division, which was on the extreme right, drove it back, and then fell on and forced back the other two divisions (Davis's and Sheridan's) of the right wing and Negley's division of Thomas's command;<sup>3</sup> but, a stout resistance was made, notably by Sheridan's division, which made front against the enemy for several hours.<sup>4</sup> Thomas had Rousseau's division, 4,688 strong, in reserve. Rosecrans withdrew his left as soon as the gravity of Bragg's attack was manifest, and he says in his report: "General Thomas was immediately despatched to order Rousseau, then in reserve, into the cedar brakes to the right and rear of Sheridan,"<sup>5</sup> and that Crittenden was ordered to send Van Cleve's division and Harker's brigade, from the left wing, in

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, 180.<sup>2</sup> 29 W. R., 200 *et seq.*, 393, 406, 674, 675.<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, 256, 408.<sup>4</sup> *Ib.*, 348, 349, 373, 407.<sup>5</sup> *Ib.*, 193.

on the right of Rousseau.<sup>1</sup> Rousseau deployed in the position indicated by Rosecrans, and then had to retreat;<sup>2</sup> he re-formed on a new line in the rear, with the aid of the reinforcements which Rosecrans had sent from the left wing, which formed on his right. He says in his report that repeated assaults of the enemy were repulsed in this position, adding: "During the last assault I was informed that our troops were advancing on the right, and saw troops, not of my division, led by General Rosecrans, moving in that direction. I informed General Thomas of the fact, and asked leave to advance my lines. He directed me to do so. We made a charge upon the enemy and drove him into the woods. . . . This ended the fighting of that day."<sup>3</sup> The reports of Crittenden and his officers confirm this, and also show that they made front against the enemy, which had driven back the right wing, all the rest of the day.<sup>4</sup> These three brigades which Rosecrans brought from the left wing numbered 3,761 men.<sup>5</sup> These facts are inconsistent with the assertion that Thomas's line remained unmoved, or that it alone saved the right wing, and it is to be noted that there is no evidence in the Record that Thomas sent forward a brigade to relieve the pressure on Sheridan.<sup>6</sup>

Turning now to the reports of the commanders in the left wing, we find no evidence that it was threatened with disaster or that it left the fate of the day to depend on Thomas. We have already seen that it spared three brigades to go to the aid of Thomas and the right wing. Of the remainder, the only brigade which was forced back was Cruft's of Palmer's division, which had place in the original line, next on the left of Negley's division, and which after a long and hot action was flanked by the enemy because Negley gave way, exposing its flank. The remaining four brigades of the left

<sup>1</sup> 29 W. R., 193, 377.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, 378.

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.*, 201.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, 373, 374, 378.

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.*, 449, 500, 574, 583.

<sup>6</sup> *Ante*, 180.

wing, 6,498 strong,<sup>1</sup> under Crittenden, aided by Sheridan's men, who came into action again after supplying themselves with ammunition, held their position in the line with severe fighting until night. In fact, they were the only troops who maintained their original position.<sup>2</sup> The reports give a great deal of evidence of the bravery and resolution of Thomas, but the same is true of Rosecrans. He appears to have been fully equal to meeting the disaster which had overtaken his right, and the Record furnishes no evidence that Thomas took charge of the field or exercised command over any other troops than those of his two divisions.

Thomas's next battle was Chickamauga, in September, 1863. Rosecrans had crossed the Tennessee below Chattanooga, and thereby so threatened Bragg's line of communication with the South that he retreated from Chattanooga to the vicinity of Lafayette. Rosecrans took possession of Chattanooga, and then, in the belief that Bragg was retreating to Rome,<sup>3</sup> pressed on to strike him, sending Crittenden's corps from Chattanooga to Ringgold, and Thomas's and McCook's corps over the Cumberland Mountains, the former to Stevens's Gap and the latter to Alpine. On the 11th he became convinced that Bragg had been re-enforced by Johnston, and that at Lafayette, opposite the Union centre, he awaited re-enforcements from Virginia to take the offensive. Rosecrans then ordered Crittenden and McCook to close on Thomas, and the latter to await them in the position then held by him in front of Stevens's and Cooper's Gaps in Lookout Mountain. This accomplished, Rosecrans moved the whole line to his left down the Chickamauga River, which he says was "with a view to covering the Lafayette road toward Chattanooga, and facing the most practicable route to the enemy's front."<sup>4</sup> This movement was begun on the 18th and was continued until the next morning, when the enemy were encountered

<sup>1</sup> 29 W. R., 201.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, 194, 449, 450, 460, 461, 545, 561.

<sup>3</sup> 50 W. R., 52 *et seq.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.*, 55.

and the battle began. We are told in one of the recent accounts to which reference has been made above, that Thomas "by wearisome marches day and night" placed his corps "in front of the enemy's right, urgently striving to gain the road to Chattanooga, the one line of safety for the Union Army;" and that here on September 20, when the whole right wing was swept from the field, he "with only the remnants of six divisions and two brigades" held his ground against eleven divisions of twice his numbers until with the approach of night, when his ammunition was nearly exhausted, he attacked and broke through the enemy's lines.<sup>1</sup> The following is the story as told by the Record: Rosecrans had not made his movement to the left a moment too soon, for Bragg had already ordered an advance from his right, which there extended beyond Rosecrans's left. In the movement to the left Thomas passed by Crittenden's corps, thus taking position on the left flank of the army, and on the morning of the 19th, unaware of Bragg's movement, which had already begun, he sent forward a division to locate and capture what was reported to him to be a single brigade in his front.<sup>2</sup> Thomas's attack was met by a fierce counter attack from Bragg's advance near Reed's Bridge,<sup>3</sup> and the battle became so general that all the rest of Rosecrans's infantry, except the reserve corps, became involved in the battle. The result was that Bragg's attack failed. In his report he says "the enemy . . . seemed disposed to dispute with all his ability our effort to gain the main road to Chattanooga in his rear."<sup>4</sup> There is no mention in his order for the attack, of any purpose of gaining this road, and Hill, whose corps was on the right flank of his army, in his report throws doubt upon Bragg's intimation that he had such a purpose.<sup>5</sup> Although Thomas felt that it was desirable to cover this road, yet, so far as the Record goes, he does not seem to have thought that

<sup>1</sup> 68 Atlantic Monthly, 510.

<sup>2</sup> 50 W. R., 249.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, and 51 W. R., 31.

<sup>4</sup> 51 W. R., 32.

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.*, 143, 144.

it would be of paramount importance in the action which impended for the next day, in which Rosecrans confidently expected a successful result.<sup>1</sup>

In the course of the day's battle Johnson's division of McCook's corps and Palmer's division of Crittenden's corps had been sent to Thomas and had been placed in his line, so that at the close of the day he had them under his command, with three of his own divisions under Brannan, Reynolds and Baird. The order of these divisions from right to left was Brannan, Reynolds, Palmer, Johnson, Baird,<sup>2</sup> with the right flank on Missionary Ridge and the left flank on the road leading from Reed's Bridge to Rossville, the line crossing the main Chattanooga road running from Gordon's Mill to Rossville. Negley's division of his own corps had been separated from him early in the day, and at this hour was between Thomas and the troops further on the right.<sup>3</sup> At a conference held at midnight between Rosecrans and his corps commanders,<sup>4</sup> it was settled that Thomas should maintain the line then held by him, that McCook should form on Thomas's right, and that Crittenden should be held in reserve near McCook.<sup>5</sup> At six A. M. of the 20th Thomas sent a despatch to Rosecrans saying, "Since my return this morning I have found it necessary to concentrate my lines more. My left does not now extend to the road that branches off at McDonald's house to Reed's Bridge. I earnestly request that Negley's division be placed on my left immediately. The enemy's skirmishers have been discovered about three quarters of a mile from our left picket-line, facing toward the Rossville road. A division on my left would be exactly in their front. . . . General Baird has just reported to me that the enemy are moving towards our left."<sup>6</sup> The road mentioned by him was the road to Chattanooga. Thomas then had eleven brigades in his front line and three brigades

<sup>1</sup> 50 W. R., 136.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, 135.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, 56, 329.

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.*, 57, 135.

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.*, 69.

<sup>6</sup> *Ib.*, 137-138.



in reserve. The eleven brigades were in two lines, one in rear of the other, so that the front line was equivalent to five and a half brigades, while those in the rear equalled eight and a half brigades.<sup>1</sup> If Thomas had thought it was vital to cover the road to Chattanooga, it is incredible that he would not have prolonged his line to the left by moving out some of his men from the rear. The various accounts of the battle seem to have assumed that this was the only road to Chattanooga by the way of Rossville, but the map shows one still further to the left which was always open to the enemy, and one to the right which led by the Snodgrass house to Rossville. The latter was not uncovered by our line at any time during the battle which ensued on the 20th. Upon receiving Thomas's despatch of 6.30 A. M., Rosecrans at once ordered Negley to Thomas's left,<sup>2</sup> and Steedman, of Granger's reserve corps, at Rossville was informed of Thomas's report of the enemy on the left and warned to be "on the lookout,"<sup>3</sup> Granger himself having been told on the evening before he must help "in the fight to-morrow by supporting Thomas,"<sup>4</sup> and to post his corps "on the eastern slope of Missionary Ridge to support McCook or Thomas."<sup>5</sup>

Beatty's brigade, of Negley's division, reached Thomas and was posted on his left before the battle opened,<sup>6</sup> but the other two brigades of Negley's division were detained, by reason of delay in the movement of the troops that were to take their place, and did not reach Thomas until some time after the battle had begun.<sup>7</sup> Bragg had divided his army into two wings, the right under Polk and the left under Longstreet, and he ordered Polk, who was opposite Thomas, to attack at daydawn and Longstreet to then take up the attack promptly.<sup>8</sup> The attack was begun by Polk's command<sup>9</sup> between 8.30 and

<sup>1</sup> 50 W. R., 277, 278, 287, 301, 310, 367, 369, 371, 379, 409, 417, 429, 441, 535, 540, 714.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, 69.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, 138.

<sup>4</sup> 52 W. R., 741.

<sup>5</sup> 50 W. R., 69.

<sup>6</sup> *Ib.*, 367.

<sup>7</sup> *Ib.*, 58, 489.

<sup>8</sup> *Ib.*, 33.

<sup>9</sup> *Ib.*, 141.

9 A. M.,<sup>1</sup> upon the left flank and front of Baird's division, then in position on the left of Thomas's line, and in the course of an hour or two afterwards it extended to the right so far as to involve the divisions of Johnson, Palmer and Reynolds.<sup>2</sup> The attack on the front of these divisions was everywhere repulsed, but the attack on Baird's flank became so serious in the estimation of General Thomas that he repeatedly sent to Rosecrans for re-enforcements. The latter hastened the remainder of Negley's division off for Thomas, and Garfield his chief of staff wrote to McCook on the right at 10.10 A. M., "General Thomas is being heavily pressed on the left. The general commanding directs you to make immediate disposition to withdraw the right so as to spare as much force as possible to re-enforce Thomas. The left must be held at all hazards, even if the right is withdrawn wholly back to the present left. Select a good position back this way and be ready to start re-enforcements to Thomas at a moment's warning,"<sup>3</sup> following this at 10.30 with an order to send two brigades of Sheridan's division to support Thomas with all possible despatch;<sup>4</sup> but at 10.35 he wrote to Thomas, "The general commanding directs me to say, if possible refuse your left, sending in your reserves to the northward, as he would prefer having Crittenden and McCook on your right."<sup>5</sup> Thomas replied, "The enemy are pushing me so hard that I cannot make any changes. The troops are posted behind temporary breastworks;"<sup>6</sup> and at 11 A. M. he wrote, "The enemy penetrated a short time since to the road leading to McDaniel's [McDonald's] house, and I fear they are trying to cut off our communications with Rossville through the hills behind the centre of our army. I think, therefore, it is of the utmost importance that Negley's division be ordered to that point, — the left of my line."<sup>7</sup> Rosecrans replied that Negley was on the way, and that Brannan's

<sup>1</sup> 50 W. R., 277.<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, 441, 535-536, 714.<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, 489.<sup>4</sup> *Ib.*<sup>5</sup> *Ib.*, 139.<sup>6</sup> *Ib.*<sup>7</sup> *Ib.*

reserve brigade was available, and upon another call for re-enforcements coming from Thomas immediately afterwards, he ordered Van Cleve's division from Crittenden's corps to his assistance.<sup>1</sup> It will be of advantage at this point to ascertain the numbers of the contending forces. Polk attacked with Hill's and Walker's corps. They state in their reports that these two corps entered the battle on the 19th with 15,417 men.<sup>2</sup> On the 19th, Hill's corps of 8,884 men had lost 475.<sup>3</sup> In Walker's corps, Liddell's division, reported as 3,175 strong on the 18th, lost 105 on that day and 1,393 September 19-20.<sup>4</sup> Assuming half this loss to have been suffered on the 19th, the strength of the division on the 20th was 2,374. Gist's division, which lost heavily on the 19th, is reported to have entered the action on the 20th with about 1,980.<sup>5</sup> These figures would leave the force which attacked on the 20th as about 12,800. When Polk's attack began it seems that Thomas had about 17,500 present equipped for duty. This number is arrived at as follows: Thomas's corps numbered 12,458. The force of Negley's two absent brigades is not given, but as they contained seven regiments of infantry and a battery, while there were fifty-four regiments and eleven batteries in the corps, it seems safe to assume that these two brigades numbered 1,750, and upon this assumption he had of his corps 10,700 men present on the 19th.<sup>6</sup> Palmer had 5,000 men. Assuming Johnson's division to constitute one-third of the Twentieth Corps, it had 3,300 men. The losses of these two divisions on that day are not given; but assuming that it was one half of the total of 3,010 on both days, there were over 6,800 men left for the battle of the 20th.<sup>7</sup> Of all the troops which Thomas had in rear of his front line, it appears that only one brigade and a portion of another were moved to con-

<sup>1</sup> 50 W. R., 58, 59.

<sup>2</sup> 51 W. R., 146, 243.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, 198, 202.

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.*, 243, 251, 254.

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.*, 245.

<sup>6</sup> 50 W. R., 41, 170, 371, 378, 385, 717, 720.

<sup>7</sup> *Ib.*, 174, 176, 617, 720.

front the Confederates who were coming round the left flank, and considerable numbers had no share in repelling any part of Polk's line,<sup>1</sup> and it is not possible to discover in the Record the evidence of anything which should have prevented Thomas from moving his reserves to his left as Rosecrans requested, or which justified him in calling for aid from Crittenden or McCook. In fact, the attack on the left was completely beaten off without the aid of any of the troops sent by these commanders.<sup>2</sup> Hill says in his report, "The whole corps had failed in its attack. . . . A heavy pressure upon us when first disordered by the repulse might have been serious."<sup>3</sup>

When Rosecrans had started all the re-enforcements for Thomas, there remained beyond the right of the latter's command Wood's division of Crittenden's corps and Davis's division of McCook's corps, in the front line, and Laiboldt's brigade of Sheridan's division in reserve.<sup>4</sup> At this time Longstreet, holding back his right (which extended in front of Thomas) because of the failure of Polk's command next to him to make the expected impression on the Union lines,<sup>5</sup> was advancing with his left under Hood to attack in the vicinity of Brotherton's, — the point where Wood's division joined Brannan's division, which was the extreme right of Thomas's command. At this juncture a most unhappy mistake occurred. An officer of Thomas's staff, at about 10.45, informed Rosecrans that Brannan's division was out of line, and that the right of Reynolds's division, which was next on the left, was exposed, while in fact Brannan's division was in its place but somewhat retired, as if *en échelon*. Rosecrans, yet unconscious, and apparently unsuspecting, of the line which, under cover of the forest, was sweeping down on his right, promptly ordered Wood to "close up on

<sup>1</sup> 50 W. R., 277, 278, 287, 301, 310, 317, 367, 369, 371, 379, 401, 417, 429, 441, 448, 535, 714, 1040.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, 278.

<sup>3</sup> 51 W. R., 143-144.

<sup>4</sup> 50 W. R., 59, 580.

<sup>5</sup> 51 W. R., 288.

Reynolds as fast as possible, and support him.”<sup>1</sup> Wood faced to the left and came up against Brannan’s division, but, ignorant of the error in fact which had caused Rosecrans to send him the order, passed in rear of Brannan to obey the order literally. On the way he met Thomas, who told him that Reynolds did not need support, and took the responsibility of ordering him to the extreme left wing to support Baird’s division.<sup>2</sup> An attempt was made by McCook to close up the gap left by Wood with Davis’s division,<sup>3</sup> but before this was accomplished Hood’s line swept through this gap so rapidly as to cut off and carry away several regiments from the rear of Wood’s column and a brigade of Van Cleve’s division as they were marching to the left.

The withdrawal of the re-enforcements for Thomas had left in the line of the right wing of the army only Davis’s division of two brigades and Laiboldt’s brigade of Sheridan’s division, numbering in all not over 2,600 men.<sup>4</sup> Hood’s line enveloped them on the right flank, and quickly swept them back.<sup>5</sup> Sheridan with his two other brigades was hastening towards Thomas when Hood’s men, coming round the right flank of Davis, struck him. He halted and faced them, but was forced back. He made repeated stands, until, discovering that the enemy had pushed between him and the left wing of the army, he endeavored to join Thomas by the Dry Creek Valley Road.<sup>6</sup> Finding the enemy had pushed to this road, and were in his path, he marched to Thomas by the way of Rossville, and a little before nightfall joined Thomas’s left in advance of Rossville, but did not come into engagement with the enemy.<sup>7</sup> He had with him not over 2,500 men.<sup>8</sup> The three regiments of Wood’s division which were carried away numbered 452.<sup>9</sup> The brigade of Van Cleve’s division which was carried away numbered on the 19th 1,384.<sup>10</sup> The sum of

<sup>1</sup> 50 W. R., 59, 635.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, 251, 635.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, 490, 500.

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.*, 42, 490, 500, 580.

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.*, 500.

<sup>6</sup> *Ib.*, 580-581.

<sup>7</sup> *Ib.*, 581, 584, 597.

<sup>8</sup> *Ib.*, 581.

<sup>9</sup> *Ib.*, 643, 656.

<sup>10</sup> *Ib.*, 810.

all these numbers is 6,936. This is probably an excessive estimate of the strength of what has been called the right wing, which was swept away. All the rest of the army had joined, or were marching to join, Thomas. Longstreet's men, turning to the right, struck the right flank and rear of Brannan's division, and forced it to swing backwards, and then Wood and Van Cleve joined Brannan, and they formed a new line facing the direction of Longstreet's attack in flank, and made front against the enemy.<sup>1</sup> At about 2 p. m., Thomas, unaware of the disaster on the right, riding towards his right, and still expecting to see Sheridan coming to re-enforce him,<sup>2</sup> was undeceived by the onset of Longstreet's troops from the right in place of Sheridan. A stubborn battle then ensued on this flank. Granger, hurrying up from Rossville, joined Thomas with three brigades. The strength of two of these brigades is given as 3,913.<sup>3</sup> If we assume that the other (McCook's) had half this number, we make Granger's force 5,870, and the conclusion is reached that the total force which came under Thomas's command, excluding Sheridan's men, was, all told, about 32,000. Longstreet reports his force at 22,882.<sup>4</sup> Cheatham's division, which joined in the later attacks of the right wing, is reported at 4,778.<sup>5</sup> Adding Polk's force of 13,000, as above estimated, we find the total force of Bragg's army to have been little over 40,000.<sup>6</sup> Between 3 and 4 o'clock Garfield brought an order from Rosecrans to Thomas, to take command of the forces and assume a threatening attitude at Rossville.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 50 W. R., 402.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, 252.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, 856.

<sup>4</sup> 51 W. R., 291.

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.*, 79, 82.

<sup>6</sup> Colonel Dawes, in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, vol. iii. p. 676, using the returns of "present for duty," August 31, in Hood's and McLaws's divisions (49 W. R., 681), estimates the Confederate force at Chickamauga at 71,551; but this apparently includes Wofford's and Bryan's brigades of McLaws's division, which were not present (51 W. R., 18), and it also includes those lost before September 20 and the cavalry, which are not included in the above estimate of 40,000.

<sup>7</sup> 50 W. R., 140, 253, 256.

Thomas maintained a firm attitude until about 5.30, when he ordered the retreat. In beginning the movement to the rear, discovering the enemy in his path, he cleared them away by a charge of Reynolds's division. The enemy made attacks on several of the divisions as they were retiring, but met with no success, and Thomas secured his new position at Rossville. The disorder caused by Longstreet's irruption on Rosecrans's right might well have brought disaster upon the whole army if it had not consisted of brave and veteran soldiers. Thomas in this battle displayed the greatest quality as a fighter on the defence, and his admirable poise, coolness and imperturbability were doubtless worth an army corps. Whether his perception of what was to be expected from the enemy was such as we look for in a profound strategist, or whether his conservatism was responsible in any degree for the disaster due to unnecessarily stripping the right wing to re-enforce the left, is a question.

In his report Thomas makes no mention of sending the fatal message to Rosecrans which brought Wood's division out of the line, and makes no justification of his appropriation of this division. Rosecrans says that Captain Kellogg brought the word.<sup>1</sup> Van Horne does not say who brought it.<sup>2</sup> Turchin, in his history of the battle, says that Captain Kellogg heard it from Reynolds, and accepted it as a fact, and reported it to Rosecrans,<sup>3</sup> and the latter adopted this theory in a letter to the Adjutant-General, January 12, 1864.<sup>4</sup> Cist, in his history of the Army of the Cumberland, says that Lieutenant-Colonel Von Schrader of Thomas's staff, after riding the lines, reported the alleged fact to Thomas, and that the latter sent the information to Rosecrans.<sup>5</sup> Much blame has been thrown on General Wood for not discovering that the order to close up on Reynolds could not be fulfilled literally, and for not reporting to Rosecrans for

<sup>1</sup> 50 W. R., 59.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Van Horne, A. of C., 347.

<sup>3</sup> Turchin, 112.

<sup>4</sup> 50 W. R., 1017.

<sup>5</sup> Cist, 206.

instructions when he discovered this fact. The inquiry arises whether General Thomas did not commit a graver fault in ordering Wood's division still farther away without consulting Rosecrans.

The "legend" of a map entitled, "Tactical Study of the Battlefield of Chickamauga," issued by the War Department (Sheets 5 and 6), for which Captain Kellogg was responsible, stated that Brannan's division, having been placed in reserve for Thomas on the night of the 19th, was moved to the front without his knowledge on the morning of the 20th.<sup>1</sup> This seems to be inconsistent with the reports,<sup>2</sup> and Van Horne's history.<sup>3</sup> The writer is informed from the War Department that Captain Kellogg based his statements on the memory of himself and others; and General Rosecrans writes that the legend is wrong.<sup>4</sup>

Immediately after this battle, when Grant was placed in command of the operations between Virginia and the Mississippi, he chose Thomas to command the Army of the Cumberland as we have seen.<sup>5</sup> It has been said that it would have been only just to have entrusted the supreme conduct of affairs in the region around Chattanooga to Thomas instead of Grant. This leads to a comparison of their records up to that time. Thomas had won the victory of Mill Springs, and had commanded the right wing at the siege of Corinth, a corps at Stone's River and the left wing at Chickamauga. Grant's first battle at Belmont in November, 1861, was not glorious because, having landed to attack a force there, he was obliged to take to his boats again, but tactically it was to his credit, for, with a force of 3,114 men, he, with a loss of 485, broke up the enemy's camp, inflicted a loss of 641, and with raw troops effected a safe

<sup>1</sup> The legend of Plate xlvi. of the Atlas to accompany the War Records, published in 1892, since this paper was written, does not contain this statement.

<sup>2</sup> 50 W. R., 57, 401, 1040.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Van Horne, A. of C., 342.

<sup>4</sup> *Supra*, 243.

<sup>5</sup> 53 W. R., 404; 55 W. R., 11.



and orderly embarkation in the face of a force made superior to his by re-enforcement.<sup>1</sup> In February, 1862, he started from Cairo for Fort Henry, sixty miles up the Tennessee River. The Confederates abandoning the fort on the approach of the navy, he marched at once for Fort Donelson, eleven miles away. The navy attacked and was repulsed. The enemy made a sortie which was repulsed, and Grant pushed up against the work. The commander and several thousand men fled on the night of the 15th, and on the 16th the fort was surrendered with a force reported by Buckner as 9,000 men.<sup>2</sup> Grant in his Memoirs states that 14,623 surrendered, and that the total Confederate force opposing him at first was 21,000.<sup>3</sup> Buckner reported the total force as not over 12,000,<sup>4</sup> and Pillow reported it at 13,000.<sup>5</sup> The Record does not state Grant's force, but he states it in his Memoirs as 27,000.<sup>6</sup>

At Shiloh, April 6, 1862, with a force reported as numbering 37,593 present for duty,<sup>7</sup> he was attacked by Johnston with a force reported as having 40,335 effectives.<sup>8</sup> Probably Grant's "present for duty" should be reduced ten per cent. for a comparison. His army was forced back for a mile or two to the Tennessee River, and there with the aid of Nelson's division of 4,541 men from Buell's army and two gunboats he took up a new line,<sup>9</sup> and on the next day, re-enforced by Wallace's division of his own army and about 20,000 men of Buell's army, he drove the enemy from the field,<sup>10</sup> inflicting a loss of 10,694, and suffering a loss of 13,047.<sup>11</sup>

The Record disproves the statement so often made that the Union Army was surprised. It shows that the battle was opened by the attack of an advance party from one of the Union divisions,<sup>12</sup> and that each division was in line of battle

<sup>1</sup> 3 W. R., 269, 271, 310, 325, 327, 346, 350.

<sup>2</sup> 7 W. R., 335.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Grant's Memoirs, 314-315.

<sup>4</sup> 7 W. R., 335.

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.*, 283.

<sup>6</sup> 1 Grant's Memoirs, 315.

<sup>7</sup> 10 W. R., 112.

<sup>8</sup> *Ib.*, 396.

<sup>9</sup> *Ib.*, 324.

<sup>10</sup> *Ib.*, 108; 11 W. R., 148; 1 Van Horne, A. of C., 112, 115.

<sup>11</sup> 10 W. R., 108, 395.

<sup>12</sup> *Ib.*, 278.

to receive the enemy's attack.<sup>1</sup> McPherson says, "It was well known the enemy was approaching our lines, and there had been more or less skirmishing for three days preceding the battle."<sup>2</sup> Hardee, who commanded the Confederate advance, says, "At early dawn the enemy attacked the skirmishers in front of my line;"<sup>3</sup> and Bragg says, "The enemy did not give us time to discuss the question of attack, for soon after dawn he commenced a rapid musketry fire on our pickets."<sup>4</sup> The belief that there was a surprise seems to rest mainly on Grant's despatch to Halleck of April 5, "I have scarcely the faintest idea of an attack (general one) being made upon us, but will be prepared should such a thing take place,"<sup>5</sup> and Sherman's despatch to Grant of same day, "I have no doubt nothing will occur to-day more than some picket firing."<sup>6</sup> Sherman was right, for nothing more did occur that day, and although Grant's prophecy was wrong, it ought to have been right. Corinth, where the Confederates were, was only twenty miles from Pittsburg Landing, where Grant had landed three weeks before. At least ten days before it was evident to Johnston that Grant's purpose was to seize Corinth,<sup>7</sup> and it would not have been a violent presumption that Johnston knew of Buell's march from Nashville to join Grant, which began as early as March 18,<sup>8</sup> and as Johnston had waited until Buell was within ten miles it was not reasonable to suppose that he would attack at that juncture, having refrained during so long a time when Grant was alone. His only justification for leaving his strong defensive position was the attempt to beat Grant before Buell could arrive.<sup>9</sup> The logical result of his delay was the total and bitter defeat which his army suffered. Bragg wrote to Beauregard the next day on the road to Corinth: "Our condition is horrible. Troops utterly disorganized and demor-

<sup>1</sup> 10 W. R., 114, 148, 203, 248, 278.      <sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, 181.      <sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, 568.

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.*, 464.      <sup>5</sup> *Ib.*, 89.      <sup>6</sup> 11 W. R., 93-94.      <sup>7</sup> *Ib.*, 361.

<sup>8</sup> *Ib.*, 42, 46.      <sup>9</sup> 10 W. R., 385; 11 W. R., 381, 383, 387.

alized. . . . Our artillery is being left all along the road by its officers ; indeed I find but few officers with their men.”<sup>1</sup>  
 “The men are exhausted, dispirited, and work with no zeal ;”<sup>2</sup>  
 and Breckinridge wrote to Bragg, “My troops are worn out and I don’t think can be relied on after the first volley.”<sup>3</sup>

Grant’s presence at Savannah, eight miles down the river, was not due to false security. Buell had asked him to meet him there on his arrival, which took place on the evening of the 5th,<sup>4</sup> and Grant had more reason to fear an attack on his depot at Crump’s Landing, four miles below Pittsburg Landing, than on the latter place. At Savannah he was below both places, and within easy reach of either by steamer.<sup>5</sup>

Halleck refuted the charge that the army was surprised in a report to the Secretary of War, having made careful inquiry soon after the battle.<sup>6</sup>

When Halleck went to Washington in the following July, Grant was placed in command of the operations in West Tennessee, Kentucky and Mississippi. He directed the campaign in which the actions at Iuka and Corinth were fought, and in December he began the series of operations for the capture of Vicksburg. After the resolute but vain efforts to seize a position from which to approach it on the east side of the Mississippi, being urged by Halleck to join forces with Banks to operate against Port Hudson or Vicksburg,<sup>7</sup> on the 12th of April he started down the west side of the river, passed Vicksburg, and then crossed the river, attacked and routed about 5,000 Confederates under Bowen at Port Gibson, May 1.<sup>8</sup> Then learning that Banks was off in Louisiana,<sup>9</sup> without delay he pushed into the interior, brushed aside the advance of the enemy,<sup>10</sup> pene-

<sup>1</sup> 11 W. R., 398.<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, 399.<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, 400.<sup>4</sup> *Ib.*, 91 ; 10 W. R., 291.<sup>5</sup> 10 W. R., 175, 178, 179.<sup>6</sup> *Ib.*, 98, 99.<sup>7</sup> 36 W. R., 25.<sup>8</sup> *Ib.*, 26, 29, 34.<sup>9</sup> 38 W. R., 223, 225.<sup>10</sup> 36 W. R., 36.

trated between the armies of Pemberton at Vicksburg and Johnston at Jackson,<sup>1</sup> and after defeating the latter turned the whole force on Vicksburg, and, investing that place, compelled its surrender with 30,000 men July 4.<sup>2</sup> Johnston's effective force behind him was reported June 25 at 28,154,<sup>3</sup> and the losses of the Confederates in action are set down in the incomplete reports as over 6,350.<sup>4</sup> Their total force is thus shown to have been at least 64,500. Grant's force present for duty, all told, up to his arrival before Vicksburg, was a little less than 57,000.<sup>5</sup> The strategy which accomplished such results was of a kind unheard of in our war up to that time, and was worthy of the most brilliant commanders in history. It would have been strange if the authorities at Washington, seeking for a leader to drive the Confederates from East Tennessee, should have preferred Thomas, even with all his noble qualities, to a general with this record of incessant activity, successful strategy and aggressive tactics. Grant assumed command October 18, arrived at Chattanooga on the 23d,<sup>6</sup> and on November 18 issued orders for the attack on Bragg's army, which, following the Union army from the battle of Chickamauga, had taken position on Missionary Ridge and Lookout Mountain in the face of Chattanooga.<sup>7</sup> Sherman had brought up a part of the Army of the Tennessee on the other side of the Tennessee River. He was to attack on the left, while Thomas attacked on the centre and on the right. Grant wrote to Thomas, "The general plan, you understand, is for Sherman . . . to effect a crossing of the Tennessee River just below the mouth of Chickamauga, . . . and to secure the heights from the northern extremity to about the railroad tunnel before the enemy can concentrate against him. You will co-operate

<sup>1</sup> 36 W. R., 36.<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, 44.<sup>3</sup> 38 W. R., 978.<sup>4</sup> 37 W. R., 82, 99, 112, 328, 654.<sup>5</sup> Including the 4th Division of the 16th Corps, 37 W. R., 148, 154; 38 W. R., 249.<sup>6</sup> 54 W. R., 706.<sup>7</sup> 55 W. R., 31.

with Sherman. The troops in Chattanooga Valley should be well concentrated on your left flank, leaving only the necessary force to defend fortifications on the right and centre, and a movable column of one division in readiness to move whenever ordered. This division should show itself as threateningly as possible on the most practicable line for making an attack up the valley. Your effort then will be to form a junction with Sherman, making your advance well toward the northern end of Missionary Ridge, and moving as near simultaneously with him as possible. The juncture once formed, and the Ridge carried, communications will be at once established between the two armies by roads on the south bank of the river. Farther movements will then depend on those of the enemy.”<sup>1</sup> Sherman having started up the river for the crossing, Thomas on the 23d, under orders from Grant to ascertain whether Bragg was retreating as had been reported,<sup>2</sup> assaulted Bragg’s advanced line in front of the town and seized and held Orchard Knob; and the next morning Hooker, being sent by Thomas to make a demonstration against the enemy’s left flank on Lookout Mountain to divert them from Sherman while he was crossing the river, carried the point and eastern slope of the mountain at about midday.<sup>3</sup> Sherman crossed the river and seized the northern end of the Ridge on the same day.<sup>4</sup> Grant then wrote to him: “You will attack the enemy at the point most advantageous from your position at early dawn to-morrow morning (25th instant). General Thomas has been instructed to commence the attack early to-morrow morning. He will carry the enemy’s rifle-pits in his immediate front, or move to the left to your support, as circumstances may determine best.”<sup>5</sup> And to Thomas: “I have instructed General Sherman to advance as soon as it is light in the morning, and your attack, which will be simultaneous, will be in co-opera-

<sup>1</sup> 55 W. R., 31.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, 33, 41.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, 43, 95, 105, 106.

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.*, 33, 34.

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.*, 43.

tion. Your command will either carry the rifle-pits and Ridge directly in front of them or move to the left, as the presence of the enemy may require."<sup>1</sup> Sherman attacked with great vigor but could not get beyond the railroad tunnel.<sup>2</sup> Grant reports that he had intended to delay the attack on the centre for Hooker's appearance on the left flank of the enemy *via* the Chattanooga Valley, the Summertown road and Rossville according to orders.<sup>3</sup> Sherman apparently did not understand the delay, for at 12.45 P. M. he asked, "Where is Thomas?"<sup>4</sup> Thomas replied at 1 P. M. from Orchard Knob, "I am here; my right [Hooker] is closing in from Lookout Mountain toward Missionary Ridge."<sup>5</sup> The enemy were then seen massing re-enforcements on their right against Sherman,<sup>6</sup> and Baird's division was despatched from Thomas to re-enforce him, but he sent word to Grant that he did not need re-enforcement and Baird formed on Thomas's left.<sup>7</sup> Grant says in his report that he then directed Thomas to move forward the centre, "and carry the rifle-pits at the foot of Missionary Ridge, and when carried to re-form his lines on the rifle-pits with a view to carrying the top of the Ridge."<sup>8</sup> Thomas's troops not only obeyed the order to carry the rifle-pits, but also of their own accord, without halting to re-form, pushed on and carried the Ridge, and the enemy were routed.

It has been asserted that Grant did not intend to carry the Ridge by this attack, that no order to that effect can be found, and that the movement was intended as a mere diversion in Sherman's favor. The latter assertion seems inconsistent with the fact that Sherman had just before declined re-enforcements. It is probable that Grant gave his order to Thomas orally as they were together. No written copy is contained in the Record, but what seems to be conclusive evidence that it contemplated carrying the Ridge

<sup>1</sup> 55 W. R., 44.<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, 574-575.<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, 34, 96, 112, 113, 115.<sup>4</sup> *Ib.*, 44.<sup>5</sup> *Ib.*<sup>6</sup> *Ib.*, 34, 78, 96, 750.<sup>7</sup> *Ib.*, 508.<sup>8</sup> *Ib.*, 34.

is found in Baird's report. He says that an officer of Thomas's staff brought him an oral order to take the rifle-pits, and told him that "this was intended as preparatory to a general assault on the mountain, and that it was doubtless designed by the major-general commanding that I should take part in this movement, so that I would be following his wishes were I to push on to the summit."<sup>1</sup> One writer intimates that Thomas deserves credit for the spontaneous action of his troops because his long command over them had infused them with the spirit which actuated them.<sup>2</sup> The Record hardly sustains this proposition, for it shows that of the four divisions which made the assault, Sheridan's and Wood's which were in the centre were not of Thomas's corps and had been under his command only five weeks.

It has also been said that Grant had determined to give Sherman the principal part in this battle, and that this was unwarranted in view of Thomas's greater experience and successes, but the Record does not confirm this view. While it is clear that Grant intended to have Sherman seize the Ridge as far as the tunnel before Thomas should attack in the centre, yet we have already seen that Thomas's attack was intended to be concurrent with Sherman's when the latter had reached the tunnel, and we find that his force was greater than Sherman's. The latter had the divisions of M. L. Smith, Ewing and J. E. Smith of his own army and the division of Davis of Thomas's army, in all numbering 19,317 present for duty.<sup>3</sup> It appears that it was not originally intended that Howard's corps should come under his command, but joining him during the battle it brought 6,370 present for duty, thus making his total force 25,687.<sup>4</sup> Osterhaus's division of his army numbering 3,734 present for duty<sup>5</sup> was under Thomas's command, and the total of his infantry and artillery present for duty was 40,963.<sup>6</sup> Of the

<sup>1</sup> 55 W. R., 508.

<sup>2</sup> *Ante*, 186.

<sup>3</sup> 55 W. R., 13.

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.*, 349.

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.*, 13, 95.

<sup>6</sup> *Ib.*, 12-14.

troops from the Army of the Cumberland, Sherman put into action only one battery and three regiments. In this case as in others at least ten per cent. should be deducted from the "present for duty" of the Union armies to compare them with Confederate reports of "effectives present." It appears that three weeks before, the twenty-six brigades of infantry and the artillery which engaged in the battle on the Confederate side, numbered about 33,000.<sup>1</sup> The force opposed to Sherman at the tunnel was Cleburne's division of four brigades, numbering 5,213 effectives,<sup>2</sup> and six or seven brigades from other divisions.<sup>3</sup> The force opposed to Thomas's four divisions of 27,216 present for duty, which attacked in the centre, comprised fourteen brigades, numbering about 17,900 effectives.<sup>4</sup> In the course of the battle three<sup>5</sup> of these brigades were sent to make part of the above mentioned force opposing Sherman.

March 12, 1864, Grant was given the command of all the armies and Sherman was given the command extending from Arkansas to East Tennessee.<sup>6</sup> Commenting upon this, one writer has said that Thomas "had held far greater responsibilities than Sherman, — had commanded larger armies, had taken leading part in more battles, had achieved far more important results, and had always been successful,"<sup>7</sup> and that it was a public misfortune that Grant did not display towards Thomas at least a portion of the friendship and confidence which he entertained for Sherman. If this means that the

<sup>1</sup> The artillery of Walker's division, estimated at 315, and Reynolds's brigade, estimated at 908, as one-third of Buckner's division; and 300 deducted from Wright's brigade for absent regiments. 55 W. R., 709.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, 656.

<sup>3</sup> Wright's, Lewis's, Brown's, Cumming's, Maney's, besides one not identified, and possibly Pettus's. *Ib.*, 707, 708, 739, 726, 749, 753, 735, 751, 725.

<sup>4</sup> Hindman's, Walker's and Stewart's divisions, two brigades of Breckinridge's division, estimated at 3,774, and Reynolds's brigade. *Ib.*, 740, 741, 747, 748, 739, 656.

<sup>5</sup> Cumming's and Maney's, and one not identified. *Ib.*, 735, 751.

<sup>6</sup> 59 W. R., 58.

<sup>7</sup> 68 Atlantic Monthly, 511.



command in the West should have been given to Thomas rather than to Sherman, a summary of the latter's career as contained in the Record should be compared with Thomas's up to this date. Sherman commanded a brigade at Bull Run. In April, 1862, at Pittsburg Landing he won the approbation of every one by his resolute opposition on the first day with his division of 8,800 men, and on the second day he led it to victory. On the 28th of May in the siege of Corinth with his division re-enforced by two brigades he fought a successful engagement in the presence of Grant and Thomas.<sup>1</sup> In December he took four divisions of 32,000 men<sup>2</sup> in the expedition down the Mississippi against Vicksburg and made the unsuccessful attack on Haynes Bluff.<sup>3</sup> He says in his report that the attack was necessary to a successful accomplishment of his orders,<sup>4</sup> and that he attributes the "failure to the strength of the enemy's position."<sup>5</sup> A fortnight later he commanded one of the two corps in the successful attack on Arkansas Post, where with a loss of 1,061 men<sup>6</sup> a fort, with 17 pieces of artillery and 5,000 men, was captured.<sup>7</sup> In the Vicksburg campaign he commanded a corps of 20,000<sup>8</sup> and took part in the siege and the battle of Jackson and the assaults of May 19 and 22.<sup>9</sup> If anything more than this record were necessary to justify Grant in choosing Sherman as his lieutenant in the West, his incessant activity and his hearty and prompt support of Grant in everything which had been essayed—in good and in evil fortune—would have justified Grant in confiding to him the charge of the great campaign which was to begin with the spring of 1864.

As the publication of the War Department Records has not yet reached the Atlanta campaign, it is not within the scope of this paper to compare Sherman and Thomas in that

<sup>1</sup> 10 W. R., 743.

<sup>2</sup> 24 W. R., 603, 604.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, 605 *et seq.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.*, 608.

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.*, 610.

<sup>6</sup> *Ib.*, 719.

<sup>7</sup> *Ib.*, 708, 780, 783, 791.

<sup>8</sup> 38 W. R., 249.

<sup>9</sup> 36 W. R., 54, 55, 751 *et seq.*

campaign, but certain parts of the correspondence between them and Grant upon the eve of the march to the sea throw such light upon the question whether Sherman in taking away so large a force as he led to the coast unjustifiably weakened Thomas or imperilled the national cause in Tennessee, that it will not be unprofitable to notice them here. One writer has said that while Sherman took away 62,000 men he left with Thomas only "25,000 men, — the remnants of the two smallest corps, including all dismounted cavalry, all sick and wounded."<sup>1</sup> Turning to the correspondence, we find a report of Sherman to Grant, November 1, that Thomas had 40,000 to 45,000 men and that two divisions were on the way to him from Missouri,<sup>2</sup> and a despatch from Sherman to Thomas, November 2, as follows: "According to Wilson's account, you will have in ten days full 12,000 cavalry, and I estimate your infantry force, independent of railroad guards, full 40,000 men, which is a force superior to the enemy."<sup>3</sup> Thomas in his report of the campaign estimates Hood's force which was then at Florence, Alabama, about a hundred miles south of Nashville, at 52,000 to 60,000.<sup>4</sup> We shall not be able to determine whether it was within these limits until the Confederate reports are published, but it is safe to assume that Thomas did not underestimate it, in view of his knowledge at the time of making his report, which was after he had met and defeated this force.<sup>5</sup> Sherman was unable to divine whether Hood would follow him as he marched into Georgia or would try

<sup>1</sup> 68 *Atlantic Monthly*, 511-512.

<sup>2</sup> C. W., 1 Sup., Sherman's Report, 251.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, 252. Thomas also states his effective force, excluding that guarding the railroad and various posts, as about 29,700.

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.*, Thomas's Report, 369.

<sup>5</sup> The War Records published since the above was written state the "present for duty" under Thomas's command, November 20, as 71,473; and the "present for duty" in Hood's command, November 6, as 35,662, of which 30,599 were effectives, and to which, apparently, at least 5,500 should be added, for Forrest's and Roddey's cavalry. 93 W. R., 52, 648, 678.

to invade Tennessee. He wrote to Thomas October 29, "I will give you notice when I start. All preparations are now progressing, but I want to know Hood's movements and how well you are prepared before I start;"<sup>1</sup> again on the 31st, "You must unite all your men into one army, and abandon all minor points, if you expect to defeat Hood. He will not attack posts, but march around them;"<sup>2</sup> and again from Kingston about half way from Chattanooga to Atlanta November 10, "All will be ready to start from here the day after to-morrow. Keep me well advised. I think you will find Hood marching off, and you should be ready to follow him;"<sup>3</sup> and on the 11th, "I can hardly believe Beauregard would attempt to work against Nashville from Corinth as a base at this stage of the war, but all information seems to point that way. If he does, you will whip him out of his boots. . . . I still believe public clamor will force him to turn and follow me."<sup>4</sup> On the next day Thomas wrote, "I have no fears that Beauregard can do us any harm now, and if he attempts to follow you I will follow him as far as possible. If he does not follow you, I will then thoroughly organize my troops, and, I believe, shall have men enough to ruin him unless he gets out of the way very rapidly."<sup>5</sup> This was the last despatch between them. On that day communications were broken, and Sherman's army marched to Atlanta. It marched out of that place for the Atlantic coast on the 15th. After this correspondence it would seem that Sherman's consideration for Thomas was not open to question. That the force left with Thomas was sufficient was proven by the event. Whatever risk resulted later from Schofield's position at Franklin and Spring Hill was due to Thomas's choosing to have him at Franklin rather than at Nashville.

Sherman had before him the necessity of living on the

<sup>1</sup> C. W., 1 Sup., Sherman's Report, 245.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, 249.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, 264.

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.*, 266.

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.*, 267.

country in a march of three hundred miles. How easy or how difficult this was to be could not be foreseen. It was possible that a full half of his army would have to scatter itself over the country to search for food and forage, and it was also possible that serious obstacles might be thrown in the path of the army which would detain it and seriously embarrass it unless its numbers were sufficient to sweep opposition from its path and clear the road of physical obstacles without delay. A great preponderance of numbers over any possible opposing force was necessary for these contingencies. Again, if Hood had taken the course of following on Sherman's heels, he too might have brought disaster upon a force not greatly stronger than his own. On the other hand, Hood in attempting to invade Kentucky, much more in sitting down before a fortified place held by Thomas, with his railroad to the South broken up and his source of supplies harried up by Sherman, was sure to be at a great disadvantage against equal numbers, and in an actual attack on fortifications he could have no hope. There were reasons for giving Sherman and Thomas entire confidence in the ability of the latter, with the force left him, to defeat Hood if he turned northward. Besides this, Thomas had the resources and men of the whole North at his back.

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[The originals of the following letters have been placed with the manuscript of this paper in the Archives of the Society by Colonel Livermore.]

War Department, War Records Office,  
WASHINGTON, December 29, 1891.

MY DEAR SIR,—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your favor of the 27th inst., in regard to "The Tactical Study of the Battlefield of Chickamauga," which has recently been issued by the War Department. As that work was not published by this office, I am only familiar, in a casual way, with the text of the legends that are inscribed

on the several maps ; I only know that it was done with the greatest care by an officer of the highest character and capacity, from his training, for the work, which, from his association with General Thomas as an aide during the battle, he was peculiarly well fitted to undertake. I will, therefore, refer your letter to him, and he will explain to you the authorities upon which his statements were based, and I remain,

Faithfully yours,

GEORGE B. DAVIS,  
Major, U. S. A.

To T. L. LIVERMORE, Esq.

War Department, War Records Office,  
WASHINGTON, *December 30, 1891.*

MY DEAR SIR, — I have seen Colonel Kellogg, with reference to the legends on the Chickamauga maps, and he tells me that his data concerning all points not covered by the Union and Confederate reports of the battle were derived mainly from what he himself saw, as an aide-de-camp for Major-General Thomas, during the battle, and what was known to other general and staff officers, and others, who were participants in the battle, and had to do with the movements on Sunday afternoon, along General Thomas' line.

If there is anything further in the way of information I can give you, I hope you will command me freely, and I remain,

Faithfully yours,

GEORGE B. DAVIS,  
Major, U. S. A.

To T. L. LIVERMORE, Esq.

WASHINGTON, D. C., *January 13, 1892.*

MY DEAR COLONEL, — Replying to yours received about one week ago : I have not yet had time to examine the maps nor the legend of the atlas of which you speak ; but, from what you say, it must be in error and the reports correct.

Brannan's division was reported to have one brigade on

the line of Reynolds' right at the time the orders were made out and delivered to the corps commanders at headquarters in the widow Glenn's house on the night of the 19th.

Beginning very early after daylight on the morning of the 20th, General Thomas and I rode the full length of his line, beginning on the left and passing to the right. That matter was spoken of, and it was said that we would leave that brigade in line of battle, and that Brannan should hold the other two as reserves for emergencies.

I am sorry that any such mistake should have crept into the legend.

General Thomas and I were at the right of Brannan's brigade, and a little in the rear, when, saying I would send him Negley as soon as I could, I left him.

Very truly yours,

W. S. ROSECRANS.

COLONEL THOMAS L. LIVERMORE.

This letter was written in reply to my inquiry as to the correctness of the legend on War Department Map of Chickamauga to the effect that Brannan's division was moved from the reserve into the line without Thomas's order or knowledge.

T. L. L.

THE WAR AS WE SEE IT NOW.

BY

JOHN C. ROPES.

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## THE WAR AS WE SEE IT NOW.

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THE death of General Sherman removes the last of the conspicuously successful generals of the Union forces. It is true that there are still living in the North generals who have commanded large armies with distinction, who have fought and won great battles. But neither Buell nor Rosecrans, neither Pope nor Banks, remained in active command till the close of the war. The day of final triumph found others in their places. Hence it may not be inappropriate at this time, when, arrested by the death of the brilliant officer who has so recently left us, the minds of those who have lived through the war naturally turn to the scenes they have witnessed and the experience they have passed through, to glance at some of the more salient features and characteristics of our late struggle.

The magnitude of the task which the North proposed to itself — the conquest of such a vast territory, defended by such an able, resolute and gallant people — was not fully seen at the beginning. Many were the offers of troops which the Washington Government refused in the spring of 1861. The splendid opportunity, which then existed and never came again, of increasing the regular army to a force exceeding a hundred thousand men, was carelessly thrown away. Sherman, who insisted that at least two hundred thousand men would be required for the single task of opening the Mississippi River, was regarded, even as late as the fall of 1861, by many persons, as almost insane.

Similar misconceptions prevailed among our Southern

neighbors. Their authorities made no use of the opportunity which existed at the outset of the war of carrying cotton to England and drawing bills against it for the financial needs of the Confederacy. The orders which they sent to Europe for the purchase of arms and ammunition were wholly inadequate to their needs. Their preparations for defending their borders against the threatened invasion of the North were exceedingly imperfect.

Nor was this to be wondered at. The people of the United States then were and are still an unmilitary people, — like their cousins on the other side of the water. They are, it is true, by no means averse to fighting; they are unquestionably as obstinate and resolute fighters as any people on earth. But that is quite a different thing from being a military people. The “art military” was cultivated by but few of the officers of the regular army; to the major part of them and to the public at large it was nearly unknown. Hence, the recommendations of sagacious military men, like Sherman, on our side, and J. E. Johnston, on the other, were made to unreceptive ears, and were received with that peculiar impatience with which people of average abilities and fair success in life hear unwelcome advice on a subject of which they know nothing, but which in their hearts they believe to be a very simple matter.

The North was the first to rise to the height of the situation. Not only did the mortifying issue of the first battle of Bull Run put an end to the easy-going confidence with which up to that time her prosperous communities had anticipated a speedy victory, but it had the effect also of rousing that strong and determined purpose to achieve success, which had always characterized the energetic, indefatigable, resolute workers of the Eastern and Western States from Maine to Minnesota. The Northern people, accustomed to the control of ample resources and to the carrying on of large business undertakings, made their

preparations in the winter of 1861 and 1862 on a large scale. There was no stint anywhere. Men, money, ships, guns, horses, equipment of every kind, were freely forthcoming. The spring of 1862 saw large armies, admirably appointed, well-drilled and well-officered, standing on the borders of the Confederacy, waiting only the order to march; a well-equipped navy not only held all the Southern coast in the grip of its blockade, but dominated the great rivers which commanded the communications of all the advanced posts of the enemy in the West. And these vast hosts were full of a genuine and strong devotion to the cause of their country.

On the other side of the line there was little at this time to encourage the friends of the South. A careless confidence, degenerating often into contempt for their adversaries, combined with the unfamiliarity of the Southern planter with the conduct of great business enterprises, was evidenced in the weak army which J. E. Johnston opposed to that of McClellan in the East, in the wholly inadequate preparations of A. S. Johnston to maintain the hold of the Confederacy in the States of Kentucky and Tennessee, in the insufficient defences of New Orleans. When the storm had passed away, New Orleans had fallen; Kentucky and Tennessee were under Federal control; the Mississippi was free as far as Vicksburg; and it was Richmond and not Washington that was in imminent peril.

But the series of disasters with which the year 1862 opened did not daunt the spirit of the South; on the contrary, the soldiers and people of the Confederacy, now realizing for the first time the desperate nature of the contest, strengthened themselves in their determination never to yield, and redoubled their efforts. The levies of the North were met by nearly the entire military strength of the South. In place of the comforts and luxuries which were ruthlessly taken away by the invasion and the blockade, was now to be seen the patient and enduring temper which can dispense

with all that is not of absolute necessity. The Southern generals met the superior numbers of their foes with an audacity and enterprise which they had not hitherto shown that they possessed. Six weeks after Fort Donelson had surrendered with 15,000 men, and Kentucky and the greater part of Tennessee had been abandoned to the Union arms, the scattered and demoralized forces of the Confederacy in the West were united under the lead of Albert Sidney Johnston. That able and daring officer at once took the initiative. Grant at Shiloh was surprised by one of the most sudden, fierce and determined onslaughts known to military history; and although he, with the aid of a portion of Buell's army, held his own, and finally succeeded in forcing his opponent to retire, the whole affair showed how far the South was from being willing to accept defeat. So in Virginia, Stonewall Jackson, by his marvellous sagacity and daring enterprise, entirely disconcerted the plans of the Washington Government for massing an overwhelming force against Richmond; and, on Jackson's finally uniting his force to that of Lee, McClellan, whose peculiar characteristics were ill suited to deal with such emergencies, was forced to undertake a dangerous and difficult retreat from the immediate neighborhood of Richmond to Harrison's Landing on the river James.

The Federal Government, with a praiseworthy desire to stop unnecessary expense and a happy credulity as to the certainty of the success which they were sure must result from their really enormous military preparations for the spring campaign, had, early in April, 1862, actually stopped recruiting, and the Army of the Potomac now urgently needed re-enforcements. But the people of the North were in their comprehension of the situation far ahead of their rulers. The governors of the Northern States met together, and begged President Lincoln to call for 300,000 men. Mr. Lincoln was really astounded at the size of the requisition

which he was desired to make upon the patriotism of the country. He thought at first that half the number would do. But the governors, Andrew, Morgan, Curtin, Morton and the others, able men of affairs and of large experience, and who were moreover the representatives and spokesmen of the business men of the North and West, knew better, and 300,000 it was.

These illustrations show how the emergencies of the war served to bring out the resolute and unyielding traits belonging to our race,—the unconquerable determination to meet and conquer every difficulty, either by some new contribution of force, or by some desperate and daring expedient, or by patience and perseverance under existing circumstances. The war thus becomes psychologically interesting as an exhibition of the Anglo-Saxon race on trial, and on a grand theatre.

What we have just said about the governors of the Northern States and President Lincoln leads naturally to the characteristics of the latter's administration during the war. It certainly cannot be said to have been a brilliant administration. There can be no doubt that an enormous amount of money was unnecessarily spent, a great many men needlessly sacrificed and a great deal of time uselessly consumed. The resources of the North were vast, and they were tendered to the government with a patriotism and liberality that knew no measure. But the task was one that would have taxed the abilities of the most experienced ruler, and Mr. Lincoln was anything but an experienced ruler. Wisely, economically and judiciously to collect and dispose of the enormous resources of the United States required a familiarity with the conduct of affairs on a large scale, utterly beyond anything with which the President had ever had anything to do in the whole course of his life. Abraham Lincoln, though new to public office, was probably the wisest and most sagacious statesman we have ever had in

this country ; his political management of affairs during the war illustrated his great qualities and won the admiration of all men. But the military tasks imposed by the war were not only entirely outside of Mr. Lincoln's previous experience, but even he, wise and sensible as he was, did not at first realize that in such matters he had better consult experts, and be guided by them. His first appointments in the army were made almost at random. Major-generals, brigadier-generals, colonels, lieutenant-colonels, without technical training and of no military experience, appeared like comets at the head of armies and departments, or invaded the hitherto sacred quarters of the officers of the regular army, and many were the blunders with which the fates avenged these uncalled-for and injudicious vagaries of the new President.

In this connection it is interesting to note the difference between the mistakes into which President Lincoln fell in his management of military affairs, and those made by his rival on the other side of the line. The Illinois lawyer was, as we have just said, absolutely without any knowledge of military matters, and, what was quite as important, he was entirely unacquainted with the *personnel* of the army. Mr. Davis, on the other hand, had been educated at West Point, and had moreover been Secretary of War. To him the officers of the army were as well known as are the members of the bar to a lawyer in large practice. The characters, special acquirements, abilities, defects, of the leading lawyers of a great city are always more or less accurately known to their brethren, while a layman coming from another city must pick up his information about them as best he can. So it was with the two Presidents. Mr. Lincoln's want of acquaintance with the army displayed itself in sundry astonishing appointments to high commands. Mr. Davis, on the other hand, knew his men perfectly well. At the same time there were disadvantages, and those real ones, which

were inseparable from the relation in which the President of the Southern Confederacy stood to the high officers in its service. There was, first, the almost inevitable tendency of a man in his position, who has been educated for the army, to meddle in the actual conduct of military operations, a tendency to which Mr. Davis not infrequently yielded, and from which several of the most distinguished generals of the South suffered from time to time; and, secondly, there was the personal relation between Mr. Davis and the leading officers, men of somewhere near his own age, and in regard to whom he, naturally enough, entertained the usual personal feelings that every one has for those whom one has always known. Hence, while it cost Mr. Lincoln nothing to relieve any officer whom he thought to be unfit for his work, or to sustain one who was, as he thought, doing it well—they being all, or nearly all, personally unknown to him—it was an open secret that Mr. Davis's preferences and dislikes interfered, in the opinion of many good judges, with his management of the military affairs of the Confederacy.

It is plain from what has just been said, that the errors of the Northern President were of a kind that experience could be expected to cure,—that is, if he were at bottom a man of sense, which Mr. Lincoln certainly was, while those peculiar to Mr. Davis's administration were not likely to become ameliorated by lapse of time. And this turned out to be the fact. Mr. Lincoln's ability to select men for high military command increased visibly from year to year during the war; and not only was this the case, but his ability to give them an intelligent and appreciative support and encouragement, if they deserved it at his hands, became with every year more and more apparent. The President became, in fact, a diligent student of the war. He found in time that the rules of war were only the rules of sound sense and experience applied to a subject the general principles of which, although he knew nothing of them at the beginning

of his administration, he found himself able without great difficulty to acquire and act upon. Hence his conduct of affairs became with each year more judicious and capable. No generals could ask from any government for more considerate and intelligent support than that usually accorded by Mr. Lincoln to General Grant and General Sherman. On the other hand, Mr. Davis's peculiarities grew every year more and more pronounced. It is not necessary to give illustrations at length; it will suffice to compare the steady and unwavering backing which General Sherman received in his Atlanta campaign with the treatment of General Johnston by the Confederate Government.

At the same time, it would be foolish and useless to deny that in one respect, and that a very important one, Mr. Lincoln's administration of military affairs cannot be said to have improved with the progress of the war. We refer, of course, to the influence which the supposed necessities of politics had upon appointments to high command and assignments to duty in the field. Not even the most devoted admirers of President Lincoln would undertake to maintain that he always acted up to his lights as the Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States in all the commissions which he conferred, or in all the tasks which he laid out to be performed by the soldiers and sailors. For instance, it will hardly be pretended that Mr. Lincoln's military judgment had not in the spring of 1864 reached a point of development quite adequate to the task of refusing to General Butler the command of the two corps destined to make the co-operative movement on Richmond. To suppose that Mr. Lincoln did not know better than this is to do gross injustice to his mental faculties. Everybody in the United States who knew anything about military matters, who had followed with the slightest attention the course of war, was amazed at the selection of Butler, not because he was not an able man, or a patriotic man, but because he had



given no evidence of capacity for such a responsible task, and because there were plenty of men to be had who had shown talent of a high order. Mr. Lincoln must have known, we repeat, that to entrust this important duty to Butler was not a thing which could be defended on purely military grounds; more than this, he knew as well as anybody that it was not common sense to do it. But he did it, nevertheless; and against the known wishes of the officer who had just been called by Congress to take the general charge and management of all the military operations. For Grant desired that this important command should be given to General William F. Smith, whose brilliant operations near Chattanooga had deservedly won the highest encomiums. Whether any supposed political necessity could justify the course which Mr. Lincoln saw fit to pursue on this and similar occasions is, to make the best of it, exceedingly doubtful. Certainly no political crisis at that time was impending which could serve as such a justification. Common sense and the plainest principles of duty alike demand that the conduct of military movements shall be entrusted to the most skilful and competent officers who can be found. And although the American people, with their wonted tolerance and charity, have long since forgotten and forgiven these acts of a president whose devotion to the cause of his country was so conspicuous and sincere, yet some consideration of them cannot be omitted in making an estimate of Mr. Lincoln's administration of our military affairs.

In looking back at the war after the lapse of so many years, its characteristic features stand out far more clearly than they did at the time. We must acknowledge that the lack of a sound military direction at Washington for the first three years protracted the struggle by expending our efforts to a very considerable extent in useless or ill-considered plans. Things certainly went better when Grant was called to take the entire control; but even under him there were costly

and unnecessary expeditions, and not a little scattering of forces which might have been concentrated to give additional strength to the blows which he was preparing to strike. On the other side, also, we see the same faults. If the trans-Mississippi troops had been placed under Johnston's orders, who can tell how long that able soldier might not have held Vicksburg? Had Beauregard's and Johnston's advice been heeded in the last few months even, it is possible that a really formidable army might have been collected to confront Sherman in the Carolinas. But the very natural tendency of the invader to attack many points at once, and the equally natural tendency of his antagonist to be prepared for defence at all points, operated to multiply occasions of conflict and rendered the main operations of the war less formidable and striking than they might have been made.

In the conduct of their campaigns the generals in our war, on both sides, showed themselves better strategists than tacticians. The safety of the armies was very rarely compromised by lack of due precautions to keep up the communications. The manœuvring was sometimes very skilful. The operations of the Atlanta campaign contain admirable illustrations of good strategy on the part of both commanders,<sup>1</sup> and there are other instances in plenty, of which the operations of Jackson in the Shenandoah Valley in the spring of 1862 are, perhaps, the most conspicuous. But, mainly owing, we suspect, to the absolute lack of experience before the war in seeing large bodies of men and observing their movements, it certainly seemed to be well-nigh impossible for the American general, when he took the offensive, to get his battle fought as he intended it should be fought. Witness General J. E. Johnston's battle at Seven Pines;<sup>2</sup> General Lee's battles

<sup>1</sup> While this is being written the news arrives that General Joseph E. Johnston, Sherman's great antagonist in that campaign, has passed away. Of the Confederate officers, he was second only to Lee.

<sup>2</sup> As the Confederates term the action of May 31, 1862.

at Malvern Hill and at Gettysburg; General McClellan's battle at Antietam. These are instances of battles undertaken with preparation — though this is not so true of Malvern Hill as of the others — and with a plan in each case deliberately adopted, to carry out which the commanding general used his best endeavors. Yet the result was notoriously far from satisfying his just expectations. General Thomas's battle of Nashville constitutes a brilliant exception to these remarks. The easier tactical task of repelling an attack was often most ably performed, as, for instance, by Lee at Antietam and Fredericksburg, and by Meade at Gettysburg. Then there were generals, the most conspicuous of whom were Grant and Sherman, who, though brilliant strategists, never paid great heed to directing the details of the conflicts which their manœuvres had rendered certain to occur. The battles near Atlanta in July, 1864, and the series of bloody actions in May and June, of the same year, in Virginia, illustrate this.

The mode in which cavalry was employed in our war varied a good deal with different commanders, and in different stages of the war. From the time when the Black Horse Cavalry struck terror into the demoralized three months' volunteers at the first battle of Bull Run to the day when Sheridan's powerful cavalry corps held Lee's line of retreat from Appomattox Court House, both sides doubtless learned much regarding the employment and functions of mounted men. But American generals did not, it must be confessed, take readily to the task of handling properly this arm of the service. Very likely the fact that cavalry could no longer be expected to perform on the field of battle the duties which had hitherto constituted their chief and most glorious function, rendered our officers doubtful as to the new uses to which they should put their horse. At first, picket duty seemed most attractive — not to the cavalry, of course, but to the general commanding the army — and horses and men

were freely and ruthlessly sacrificed in this way. Then there was the important but humble task of guarding trains. But what fascinated alike the imagination of the trooper and the ingenious mind of the American general was a raid, designed to burn bridges and tear up railroad tracks, to destroy supplies, capture trains and the like. An operation of this kind necessarily involved great risks, but, bordering, as it did, in its characteristic features, on partisan warfare, it possessed great attractions for the cavalry themselves. What good was accomplished in this way has never been figured up. Stuart's raid round McClellan's lines in June, 1862, may have served a useful purpose in creating a feeling of insecurity in the Army of the Potomac; but the only tangible result of the repetition of the performance in August of the same year was the capture of the overcoat of the Federal commander; while, when for the third time the manœuvre was tried, in the Gettysburg campaign the next summer, the march of the Federal army northward actually prevented the Confederate cavalry from rejoining their main army and reporting the movement of the Federals. It was much the same thing in our experience. Hooker, the first general to set a proper value on his cavalry, no sooner got a large and finely mounted and equipped body of cavalry together, than he sent them off, a fortnight before he commenced his own campaign, to destroy the enemy's communications and supplies, and to render their retreat, in the event of a Federal success in the impending struggle between the two armies, more disastrous than it otherwise could be. The result of this farseeing move was to deprive the Army of the Potomac of the information which would have prevented the great disaster of the campaign of Chancellorsville.

In the march on Gettysburg, in the summer of 1863, General Meade employed his cavalry with excellent judgment. The signal services rendered by Buford on July 1, and the gallant and successful fight on our right flank on July 3,

fully justified his policy of keeping his cavalry well in hand, and under his own eye. But this policy was entirely reversed by General Grant. The campaign of 1864 had hardly opened when Sheridan was allowed to go off, on his own suggestion and evidently against Meade's judgment, with nearly all the cavalry of the army, on a raid toward Richmond, and it was not until Grant had crossed the Pamunkey that the cavalry rejoined the main body. Then, for a very few days, they remained with the army, and rendered excellent service, among other things capturing and holding Cold Harbor. But when, a fortnight later, the army had got down before Petersburg, Sheridan was on another raid, and the opportunity which really existed during the 16th and 17th of June of taking Petersburg when its defenders numbered less than 15,000 men, was unknown at headquarters, simply for lack of cavalry to make the needed reconnoissances.

It will hardly be questioned that the conspicuous successes which Sheridan won in the Appomattox campaign have demonstrated beyond doubt or cavil that the best service to which cavalry can be put in modern warfare, is to be rendered in conjunction with the operations of the main army. But that this service was rendered in this campaign by Sheridan's cavalry was certainly not due to General Grant. He had planned for Sheridan, and had ordered him to execute, a movement on the upper James, with a view of destroying the enemy's supplies and communications, and after having accomplished these tasks, he was to join Sherman, in the Carolinas, or else, if that were found impracticable, he was to fall back to Winchester in the Shenandoah Valley. Fortunately for the country, Sheridan found it impossible to carry out his orders, and he therefore made his way to General Grant at City Point. Even here, both Sheridan and Rawlins, Grant's chief of staff, a thoroughly practical and able man, were by no means sure at first that Grant intended to have Sheridan's

command included in the force which was destined for the campaign which was then just about to open; and it is quite certain that Grant inclined even at this period to the opinion that Sheridan would do well to cut loose from the Army of the Potomac and join Sherman in North Carolina.

Other instances of this strange inability or unwillingness of the American general to make use of cavalry in connection with the operations of the main army readily occur. Sherman, as is well known, in his Atlanta campaign, did not rely to any great extent on his horse, although the opportunities for employing cavalry to advantage must have been of constant occurrence from the time he left Dalton. And in his march across the country to Savannah, he took with him only two brigades, in all about 5,000 men.

At the close of the war, however, this arm of the service had gained due recognition. Not only was the country ringing with the achievements which Sheridan, at the head of his 10,000 horse, had obtained in the Appomattox campaign in co-operation with the Army of the Potomac, but Wilson, at the head of a similar force, fresh and admirably mounted and equipped, was overrunning the now almost deserted States of Alabama and Georgia, destroying and defeating everything that came in his way. In this case there was, it is true, no army for the cavalry commander to co-operate with. But this movement of Wilson's was no ordinary raid, for he was practically sure of meeting no opposition which his force was not quite adequate to overcome; it was rather the march of an invading column.

The views above given as to the employment of cavalry on raids differ, we presume, from those entertained during the war by most of the leading generals on both sides. Yet there is nothing, we submit with confidence, in which the effect of the lapse of time is more discernible than in changing our views of cavalry raids. It is almost inconceivable to us now, that General Lee should have sent Stuart, with less than

2,000 cavalry, in October, 1862, just after the battle of Antietam, to ride through the towns and counties of central Pennsylvania, picking up horses, clothing, boots and shoes, a few prisoners, and what not, and running the most imminent risk of being captured with his whole command. What possible good could Stuart do to the Confederacy with his petty booty, which could be compared for a moment with the exultation with which the news of his capture would have been received at the North, and the injury which it would have been to General Lee's army to have lost its great cavalry leader? So in the Gettysburg campaign — when Lee actually gave Stuart *carte blanche* to do as he liked — whether to keep between the Army of Northern Virginia and the Army of the Potomac, or to attempt to make the circuit of the latter army. What Lee and Stuart had in their minds as conceivably — by any effort of the imagination — of more importance than the ascertainment by the Confederate cavalry from day to day of the movements of the Federal Army and the conveyance of this information promptly to General Lee's headquarters — it is certainly not easy to conjecture. At that stage in the war, it was out of the question that the Federal Army should be "rattled" by any such game as this. Both officers and men were altogether too well seasoned to war to care very much where Stuart's 4,000 or 5,000 men might be. The trains were well guarded; all Stuart succeeded in bagging were 125 wagons and 400 or 500 prisoners; but, as this was all he had to show in justification of his course, he brought them all in, notwithstanding the continual delays caused by such *impedimenta*. General Halleck was probably the only Federal officer at all worried by this eccentric movement of Stuart's, and he kept telegraphing Meade, who was in command of the Army of the Potomac, to take measures to capture Stuart's column, which might, so Halleck thought, do unknown damage somewhere. But Meade, intent on the great task before him, was not to be

diverted by any side-show like this. "My main point," he coolly and dryly wrote to Halleck, "being to find out and fight the enemy, I shall have to submit to the cavalry raid around me in some measure."<sup>1</sup>

The truth is, that, considering the great difficulties which, during the period of our war, attended the raising of a well-drilled, well-equipped and well-mounted body of horse, it was not good policy for any commander, and especially for any Confederate commander, to take needless risks with his cavalry, or to subject it to unnecessary hardship and loss. While it is perfectly true that occasions where a body of horse could be utilized in actual combat were infrequent, it must be remembered that cavalry had other and often much more important functions to perform than taking part in a pitched battle, and that for the due performance of these duties the utmost efficiency of both horses and men was required. Take as an illustration the work of Sheridan's command in the last campaign. Here was a corps of cavalry, admirably commanded and sufficiently large to take care of itself for a moderate time. Preceding and covering the march of the infantry, ascertaining the right roads, seizing the important points in advance of the arrival of the main columns and holding them until support arrived, it rendered the task of the infantry and artillery, which constituted the main army, immeasurably easier and much surer of successful accomplishment. Finally, in actually getting ahead of the flying foe and barring his retreat, Sheridan's horse showed to perfection what cavalry can do in modern war. But in order that cavalry can render such service as this, their strength and efficiency must be carefully preserved until the decisive moment arrives. And the decisive moment is the moment when the great collision between the two armies takes place. For in spite of all the railroad ties that were torn up, and of all the barns that were burned, General Lee did not leave

<sup>1</sup> 43 W. R., 67.



Petersburg and Richmond until the result of the battle of Five Forks rendered it impossible for him to remain in his lines; and the battle of Five Forks was won by infantry and cavalry acting together.

Whatever doubts may have existed in the minds of American generals in regard to the proper modes of employing cavalry, there was never any question of a similar nature as to the proper function of artillery. Differences of opinion there certainly were as to the organization of this arm; attention has recently been called to them in an able paper by the late General Hunt, Chief of Artillery of the Army of the Potomac, read before the Military Historical Society of Massachusetts about a year before he died, and printed for the first time in the *Journal of the Military Service Institution* for March, 1891. His conclusion is unquestionably sound; it is "that with proper organization and administration our artillery in the Civil War, good as it was, might have been made more serviceable and produced greater results;" but he admits, and in fact claims, that the efficiency of this arm of the service in the late war was most marked. This was, by the way, as true of our adversaries as of ourselves. The American soldier seems, in fact, to take naturally to artillery. From the beginning, the guns were well served. In process of time, the chiefs of artillery, as well of the various corps as of the armies themselves, came to be famous men. It was a pity that the full rank to which the Federal officers performing these duties were fairly entitled was never accorded to them by their government. But the matter being a somewhat complicated one, Congress could never be got to pay proper attention to the organization of the artillery.

Infantry, of course, constitutes the main body of all modern armies, and by the quality of its infantry an army must be judged. The capacity of Americans to make excellent soldiers was proved in the war beyond a question. That hundreds of thousands of men, most of them entirely

unacquainted with the elements, even, of discipline and drill, were transformed in so brief a period into officers and soldiers was certainly one of the wonders of our time. But the material was, in the main, of the best; the desire to master the new trade well-nigh universal and very strong; and there were from the beginning many opportunities for practising what had been learned. The armies of 1862 were far and away superior to the levies of 1861. The armies of 1863 were decidedly superior to those of 1862. But in 1863 it is probable that the highest point of efficiency was reached in both the Federal and Confederate armies in the East, and certainly in the Western army of the Confederacy. From the autumn of 1863 these three great armies began to become less serviceable. Let us see why.

Take, first, the Army of the Potomac. This army, when it fought at Gettysburg, in July, 1863, contained, it is true, some poor troops, but it contained few or no green regiments, and no raw recruits whatever. The officers and men were veterans, the greater part of whom had had two years' service in the field. They had known victory and defeat; they could march and they could fight; they had had all sorts of experiences, and were not to be astonished nor greatly troubled by anything that could happen to them. Had a proper policy been pursued in regard to the inevitable losses, had the old regiments been kept up assiduously to the maximum strength, or to anything like the maximum strength, the Army of the Potomac would not only have been stronger at Gettysburg, but it would have gained in every way during the winter which ensued. It would have been superior in point of efficiency when it entered on the campaign of 1864 to the army which fought at Gettysburg, for the prestige of that great victory would have been the heritage of all its regiments, and would have inspired the new recruits as well as the old soldiers. But this great advantage was thrown away by the people of the North, or at least by the greater

part of the Northern States. Instead of building up the old regiments, new ones were raised. Instead of utilizing the army's capital, if we may so call it, of long service, thorough acquaintance with the duties of officers and soldiers, memories of labors, dangers and sufferings shared in common, of dark and bloody days of defeat manfully and patiently borne, of glorious scenes of victory rewarding steadfast valor and unremitting energy, — the greater part of the North blindly and recklessly threw it away. Veteran regiments, whose names and numbers had become deservedly famous, whose very traditions would forever have secured their efficiency, were allowed to waste away until they scarcely equalled a couple of full companies, and their places were taken by troops who had never smelt powder nor seen the face of the enemy. It is difficult to speak with patience of this wretched business. It is pleasanter to turn to those few States which, like Wisconsin and Illinois, kept up to their full strength the regiments which had first gone out, and with whose names were associated the honor due from the State to the steadfast performance of duty and to gallant deeds of arms. But it is plain that no army re-enforced in numbers as was the Army of the Potomac after the battle of Gettysburg could be expected to improve in efficiency, — on the contrary, it is but too evident that it must sensibly decline. The army with which Grant crossed the Rapidan on May 3, 1864, was no doubt larger by some 20,000 or 30,000 men than that which began the battle of Gettysburg; but among the old regiments was much worthless material — men whose enlistments had been induced by the extravagant bounties then paid by the States and cities of the East to get their quotas filled — and then there were plenty of absolutely new regiments, which had not been organized six months. On the other side of the river the army of Lee was weaker than it was at Gettysburg, for the very decisive reason that it had not been able to make up its losses in that terrible fight.

It had seen its best days. And the same remark applies to the main Confederate army in the West. The sanguinary struggle of Chickamauga had cost the Confederates dear; and, followed, as it was, by the recall of Longstreet's corps to Virginia, and also by the rout of Missionary Ridge, it was not possible for J. E. Johnston, who replaced the unfortunate Bragg, to take the field with a force anything like as efficient as that which so fiercely attacked Rosecrans in September, 1863.

The national instinct on this subject is perfectly correct. It was at Gettysburg and Chickamauga that our American armies were at their best and did their best. Never were they — either before or after those memorable engagements — so strong, so well officered, so fierce, so determined to win, so resolved not to yield. They were then, we repeat, at their best — containing none but seasoned troops, under veteran officers, inured to war, both armies confident of victory, and pretty nearly, taking all things together, equally matched. And no one can read the story of those great battles without being proud of his country and his race, for never was there more resolute and obstinate and gallant fighting done, nor ever were severe losses more unshrinkingly borne. Nor can it be truly said of either of these battles that the beaten army did not fight as hard and as long as its more successful antagonist. There is glory enough for all. Hence it is fitting that both fields — Gettysburg and Chickamauga — should be dedicated to the perpetual remembrance of the great battles so worthily fought there.

It may have been noticed that the Federal Army of the West was not included in the foregoing estimate. We are disposed to think that, unlike the armies of Johnston, Lee and Grant, the army commanded by Sherman entered upon the campaign of 1864 in better condition in every respect than it ever was in before. It had had ample time to repair the losses of Chickamauga; it had not been weakened, as had its

antagonist, by the withdrawal of a part of its force for service elsewhere; its losses at Missionary Ridge had not been large, and its success there had been of the most striking and brilliant kind. It was composed in the main of Western regiments that had enlisted in 1861, and had, to a great extent, at least, been kept up to a fair average of strength by the wiser and more military policy which the Western States generally adopted in the matter of recruiting their contingents, of which we have spoken above. Hence General Sherman's army reaped the full benefit of all the most favorable military conditions that can affect the efficiency of an army. Its unity had been strictly preserved; it had not been depleted by losses or by detachments; it had not been "watered" by the addition of raw troops. It was under a commander who was the idol of his men, whose great abilities were universally and cheerfully acknowledged, and who possessed the entire confidence of the General-in-Chief and the Government at Washington. And these favorable conditions continued to the close of the war. In Sherman's progress toward Atlanta, although it was marked at times by severe fighting, the losses were never excessive, considering the size of the army. While Grant, by his reckless and wasteful attacks, was throwing away his veterans ten thousand at a time, and in fact actually changing the very structure of the Army of the Potomac, his lieutenant in the West marched into Atlanta with practically the same army with which he had set out from Dalton. There had been suffered, it is true, some losses that might have been avoided, but neither these nor the unavoidable casualties of the campaign materially affected the identity or the strength of the command. The army which entered Atlanta was the army of Chickamauga and Missionary Ridge, of Peach Tree Creek and Decatur. Its career had been one of almost uniform success. The veteran troops had had their confidence in their leader and in themselves largely augmented by their

experience in this campaign. They felt themselves strong enough for anything. They were ready for new tasks. They were full of enterprise and hope. And not only the admirably conducted march of Sherman to Savannah, and his still more brilliant march from Savannah to Goldsboro', but the resolute and steady resistance which Thomas was at the same time making to Hood's invasion of Tennessee, crowned as it was by the decisive victory of Nashville, show, perhaps better than any other events in the war, what an American army, well kept up in strength, and boldly but judiciously managed, can accomplish.

In the beginning of this paper we spoke of the magnitude of the task which the North proposed to itself. It was not without apparent reason that the world doubted and smiled in derision at the presumption of the Northern Government in thinking that it could succeed in such a gigantic undertaking. Was it possible that a nation with such an insignificant navy could establish an effective blockade over three thousand miles of sea-coast? Did the Northern generals suppose that armies, large enough to overcome the fierce and universal resistance which was to be expected, could live on the country they were invading? And if not, did not the great distances to be traversed render the problem of transportation and subsistence well-nigh an insurmountable one? Some successes, no doubt, the great superiority of the North in men and material might enable it to win; very possibly the boundary might be pushed back a certain distance. But for the Northern forces to overrun the South, or to follow up the Southern armies into the interior of the country, and there to maintain themselves in the midst of an unfriendly population and on a soil in great part destitute of the means of subsistence, as a great portion of the Southern Confederacy unquestionably was, seemed to many disinterested and clear-headed men of those days well-nigh impracticable. It is true that neither Lord Palmerston nor the Emperor Napoleon the

Third inclined to the side of the North; nevertheless we believe that it was not by any means wholly due to their unwillingness to see us succeed that they predicted our failure. We believe that they judged the probabilities of the case by the light of experience; and, judging by the light of experience, it was not likely that the North would succeed if the South should resolutely persist in endeavoring to maintain her independence by force of arms. Lord Palmerston and the Emperor of the French were probably as well qualified to have an opinion on this subject as any two men in Europe; the one had been Secretary at War from 1809 to 1815, in the time of the first Napoleon; the other, although not a soldier himself, had been a diligent and intelligent student of the campaigns of his great uncle. Both these experts predicted the failure of the North. And it may safely be admitted that if the conditions of warfare had been the same in 1861 as they were in 1815, or, in our judgment, as late as 1850, their prediction would in all probability have been fulfilled.

But the conditions were not the same. Steam and electricity had in the intervening time asserted their power, and had rendered possible for a McClellan or a Grant what had been impossible for a Napoleon. It was found that the capacity of the territory, through which it was proposed to move an army, for the task of supporting that army might generally be disregarded. It was found perfectly feasible to maintain a large force for any length of time in regions where no subsistence of any sort or kind was furnished by the soil. It was found that water-transportation of men and supplies was as certain and uniform, as much to be relied upon, as transportation by land; that the winds and waves of the ocean and the strength and direction of the flow of rivers could equally be ignored when it was proposed to transport troops, or subsistence, or ammunition, to a given spot. It was found that a blockade maintained by steam vessels, though not

absolutely perfect, was a far more certain and constant check on foreign intercourse than could be effected by any employment of sailing vessels. By the telegraph all available resources could be utilized without the loss of a moment, and all information instantaneously communicated to or from headquarters to or from any part of the theatre of war. In other words, machinery had in the progress of time become one of the great factors in military operations, and its introduction worked as marked a revolution in the practice of commanders on land and sea, as its adoption for purposes of manufacture or of intercommunication had worked in the world of business and ordinary life. And, what was of the greatest importance to the North, the advantages of this great change in matters of warfare were absolutely at the call of the stronger and more wealthy of the two combatants.

There had been but little in the way of example to follow. Steam-vessels had, it is true, supplied in great part the allied armies in the Crimea. There had also been a short railroad constructed for the accommodation of the English from Balaklava to the front, but it had taken a great while to build, and it was not very serviceable after it was built. The French and Austrians had also used their railroads in the short Italian war of 1859. But there was really not much to serve as a precedent.

The task of developing the possibilities of the use of steam and electricity in warfare was, therefore, first tried on a large scale in the war of secession. Naturally and inevitably it fell to the North to deal with the subject with the greater thoroughness and ingenuity of application. For the North could overcome the great natural difficulties presented by the geographical conditions under which the war was to be carried into the Confederacy only by utilizing to the full the vast resources it possessed through the powerful agency of steam, and the incalculable assistance afforded by the electric telegraph. And it will probably be conceded



without demur, that no people ever lived more capable of making ingenious and useful applications of steam and electricity to war or to anything else, than the people of the Northern States.

The first thing to do was to enlarge the navy so as to compass a blockade of the Southern coast, and the next thing was to build a navy for use on the great rivers which run through the heart of the Confederacy. That both tasks were successfully accomplished in a very brief period reflects the greatest credit on the officers of the navy. We have not time here, nor is this the place, to give the details; but in a couple of months or thereabouts the blockade had become reasonably effective on the Atlantic seaboard and in the Gulf of Mexico; and, partly by purchasing river steamers and refitting them, and partly by building new and armor-plated vessels, the Federal Government, early in 1862, had procured a fleet on the Mississippi and its tributaries, which laid those great avenues into the interior of the South open to the Northern invaders. The first fruit of the employment of this naval force in conjunction with the army was the capture of Fort Donelson in February, 1862, with its entire garrison, entailing the evacuation, by the Confederate General A. S. Johnston, of the greater part of the States of Kentucky and Tennessee.

The task of providing subsistence and forage for the armies of both the North and South during the long months of winter and spring, when the roads were well-nigh impassable and the surrounding country afforded next to nothing which could be of service, was immensely simplified by railroads. It might be thought at first sight that the advantage of this arrangement lay with the army which was on the defensive, as their opponents would naturally be obliged to cut loose from their railroad communications in any forward movement. But it should be considered that the all-important thing for the North, whose resources so immeasurably exceeded those of the South, was to maintain as large an army as it could

get together at a point from which, as soon as the season opened, operations could be successfully commenced; and that railroads and steamboats made it always possible for the North to accomplish this. Thus, during the winter of 1864 and 1865, somewhere near 130,000 men were comfortably quartered and supplied in the Federal lines from Bermuda Hundred to Petersburg, in a country where absolutely nothing was furnished from the soil or by the inhabitants; and when the time came, Grant was able to open the campaign with an overwhelming superiority of force. If the railroads now in operation in Russia had existed in Napoleon's day, it may well be believed that he would have supplied his immense army with subsistence and forage during the winter of 1812 and 1813, and would have made a success of his invasion. And, it may equally well be believed, that, had it not been for the railroads in France, the Prussians could never have maintained during the winter of 1870 and 1871 the enormous army which surrounded and finally reduced Paris.

We must bring these remarks to a close. The war is now receiving at the hands of the American people its due measure of attention. Much of this is naturally devoted to the accumulation and arrangement of evidence, and to the elucidation of disputed questions of fact. Much of it is given to the study of the characters and actions of the prominent leaders, and to forming correct estimates of their respective shares in bringing about the great events of the time. Our principal object in writing the foregoing pages has been to draw a few of the military inferences and conclusions which, it seems to us, the narrative of the admitted facts warrants. This task of criticism has an importance of its own. For it is only by clearly perceiving and frankly recognizing the lessons taught by our own experience that we can hope to apprehend correctly the military problems of the future.

## INDEX.

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- ABBOT, H L., Bvt. Brig.-Gen., U. S. A., associated with Humphreys, 77; his tribute to Humphreys, *ib.*
- Abercrombie, J. J., Col., 7th U. S. Infantry, Confederates at Falling Waters, Va., July 2, 1861, repulsed by, 213; Thomas commissioned Brig.-Gen. in advance of, 213.
- Alabama, Wilson's 1864 raid in, 260.
- Alabama River, in Sherman's plans, autumn of 1864, 137.
- Alden, B. R., Capt. U. S. A., classmate of Gen. Humphreys at West Point, 75.
- Aldie Gap, Va., action at, 157, 159.
- Alexander, Emperor of Russia, offered Samuel Humphreys an appointment, 75.
- Alexandria, Va., its capture advised in 1861, by Lee, 5.
- Allatoona Pass, the U. S. post at, defended Oct. 5, 1864, by Gen. Corse, 138.
- Alpine, Ga., McCook's corps sent to, Sept., 1863, in pursuit of Bragg, 220.
- Alvord, B., Bvt. Brig.-Gen., U. S. A., a graduate of West Point, 75.
- Amelia Court House, Va., the only roads left for escape of Lee, April 2, 1865, those to, 91; pursuit of Lee by Humphreys to, *ib.*; Lee's loss of a day there, *ib.*
- Anacostia, U. S. gunboat, 103.
- Anderson, R., Brig.-Gen., U. S. A., Hancock's first service at Washington with, 1861, 55; assigned to command of Department of the Cumberland, Aug. 15, 1861, 174; Thomas made Brig.-Gen., U. S. V., at his instance, and assigned to his Dept., Sept., *ib.*; his command in Kentucky, 128; W. T. Sherman's service under, *ib.*; by order of Oct. 6, 1861, relieved of command of Dept. of Cum. superseded Oct. 8, by Sherman, 128.
- Anderson, R. H., Maj.-Gen., C. S. A., by accident anticipated Grant's movement to Spottsylvania, 36.
- Andrew, J. A., Governor of Massachusetts, concerned in recommendation of a call for 300,000 men, 251.
- Anglo-Saxon race on trial in the Civil War, 251.
- Annapolis, Md., Ninth Corps at, spring of 1864, 10.
- Antietam, McClellan's overestimate of the Confederate strength at, 101, 118; McClellan's statements of, criticised, 117-118; enthusiasm excited by McClellan in campaign of, 122; 158; the battle not a masterpiece of art, 120; Burnside's failure at, 121; Hancock given command of 1st division, 2d Corps, at, 57-58; Humphreys hurried to, 80; time of his arrival, *ib.*; McClellan's misstatement concerning Humphreys, 80-81; battle not fought as intended by McClellan, 257; the easier task of repelling an assault illustrated by, *ib.*; Union loss at, 34; Stuart's raid in Penna., after, 261.
- Appomattox Campaign, April 2-9, 1865, the demonstration of best uses of cavalry in, 259; renown of Sheridan's achievements in, 260.
- Appomattox Court House, Va., Lee's line of retreat from, held by Sheridan, 257; Sheridan and Ord across Lee's path at, 94; reached by Humphreys April 7, 93; surrender of Lee at, April 9, 1865, 67.
- Appomattox River, 10, 12, 14; project to extend Union left to, June, 1864, 90; in the attempt to escape of Lee's army, 92; the Union army divided by, 93; time lost in communicating across, *ib.*
- Appomattox Station, Va., but for Humphreys Lee might have reached, April 8, 93; and obtained supplies at, 94; his supply line cut and supply trains captured by Custer at, April 8, *ib.*

- Arkansas, within Department of the Mississippi, 1864, 238.
- Arkansas Post, Ark., captured by Sherman, Jan. 11, 1863, 239.
- Arlington, Va., left by Lee, April 20, 1861, to enter service of Virginia, 172; its capture in 1862 advised by Lee, 5.
- Armistead, L. A., Brig.-Gen., C. S. A., at Molino del Rey, 51; mentioned, 55.
- Army, Confederate, no disparity between that of the East and that of the West, 182.
- Army of Northern Va.: strongest of the Confederacy, 34; Stuart's freedom to separate from, June-July, 1863, 261; its strength diminished, May 3, 1864, 265; unable to make up for losses at Gettysburg. *ib.*; at its best at Gettysburg, 266; Grant's error as to its power of resistance, 37; elated by Grant's failure, 1864, 38; at Cold Harbor, 39; at Petersburg, June 18, 1864, 17; its advantage in fighting on interior lines, 41; its death in the last ditch, 44; captured, 67; history of the cavalry of, reviewed in McClellan's Stuart, 155-162.
- Army of the Cumberland: Anderson assigned, Aug. 15, 1861, to the command of, 174; W. T. Sherman assigned to service in, Aug. 28, 1861, 128; Thomas assigned to service in, Sept. 6, 1861, 174; Anderson relieved of command, Oct. 6, 1861, 128; W. T. Sherman given the command, Oct. 8, *ib.*; Buell appointed to command, Nov. 15, 1861, *ib.*; its victory under Thomas, at Logan's Cross Roads, Jan. 19, 1862, 176-177; advance on Nashville, 178; did not participate at Shiloh, *ib.*; reorganized by Halleck after Shiloh, 215; command of right wing given to Thomas, *ib.*; the command resigned by Thomas, 216; after Corinth, its destination Chattanooga, 179; at Louisville, Oct. 1, 1862, *ib.*; the command given to Thomas, and declined by him, *ib.*; Buell continued in command, *ib.*; at battle of Perryville, *ib.*; Rosecrans given command, Oct. 30, 1862, 179; at Nashville, Nov. 7, *ib.*; at battle of Stone's River, 179-180; in Chickamauga campaign, 181; battle of Chickamauga, Sept. 19-20, 1863, 181-182, 220-230; inspired by Thomas, 181; at its best at Chickamauga, 266; Cist's History of, cited as to the fatal message at Chickamauga, 229; retired to Rossville, after battle, 182; Thomas appointed, Oct. 16, 1863, to command of, 131, 230; he assumed command of, Oct. 20, 1863, 182; strength of, at beginning of Atlanta campaign, 188; in all the battles but that of July 22, before Atlanta, 189; most of the hard work given to, *ib.*; its losses, *ib.*; its interests made subservient to Army of the Tennessee by Sherman, 188, 189; Missionary Ridge, captured by, Nov. 25, 1863, 33; the capture made without orders, 132, 133, 184, 185, 186, 187; spontaneous and heroic character of the charge, 186, 187; compared to the assault on Pratten, 133; the glory due to the troops themselves, *ib.*; inspired by Thomas, if not ordered by him to charge, 186; two of the divisions under Thomas' command but five weeks, 237; Buell, Rosecrans and Thomas its heroes, 129; also called for a period Army of the Ohio.
- Army of the James: W. F. Smith desired by Grant to command, 1864, 235; the command given to Butler, *ib.*; at Bermuda Hundred, May 4, 11; "bottled up" by Beauregard, 12; under Ord. in pursuit of Lee, April 8, 1865, 94.
- Army of the Ohio: Thomas refused to supersede Buell in command of, 216. See Army of the Cumberland.
- Army of the Potomac: Barnard, Chief Engineer of, 1862, 102; U. S. gunboats provided for protection of, in transportation to the Peninsula, 103; Humphreys' service in, during Peninsular campaign, 79; retreat to the James, 1862, 57; 113; its need of re-enforcements, July, 1862, 250; McClellan superseded by Burnside in command of, 121; insecurity in, caused by Stuart's raids, 258; improved by Hooker, 121; at Chancellorsville, 83; deprived of aid of cavalry in Chancellorsville campaign, 258; Meade given command of, 86, 261; Humphreys, Chief-of-Staff of, 86-89; attack on its centre on Cemetery Ridge, July 3, 1863, 49-51; veterans engaged at Gettysburg, 264; at its best at Gettysburg, 266; Stuart's failure to damage, in ad-

- vance to Gettysburg, 160-161; believed by Grant, 1863, never to have been thoroughly well fought, 34; Grant with, 1864, 10; difficulties involved in the double command, of Grant and Meade, 87-88; crossed the Rapidan, May 3, beginning 1864 campaign, 133; its wonderful fighting in the Wilderness, 40; transfer to the James, June, 1864, 42; its strength, 40; Beauregard's plan to defeat, 13; before Petersburg, June 15, 16; failure there, 16, 17; Humphreys given command of 2d Corps, 89; Grant inclined to deprive it of the aid of Sheridan, 1865, 260; the achievements of Sheridan in March and April, 1865, in co-operation with, *ib.*; scheme to cut Lee's railway communications delayed, 90; chief sufferer from Grant's system, 37; its losses under Grant's system of attrition, 135; its waste under Grant, 267; disheartened by its losses, 38; familiar with Lee's vitality, 39; its failures, 1864-1865, not charged to Grant by Badeau, 35; the affection of, for McClellan, 122, 123; believed by McClellan capable of obedience only to him after Pope campaign, 100, 116; Hancock its most conspicuous brigade leader, 57; its losses in battle, 34; well-fed and clothed, 53; development of cavalry in, 160, 162, 257-258; development of infantry in, 264-266; the disadvantage resulting to, by disbanding veteran regiments, 265; larger but less efficient May 3, 1864, *ib.*
- Army of the Tennessee, Confederate: at its best at Chickamauga, 266; routed at, *ib.*; depleted thereafter, *ib.*; Johnston superseded Bragg in command of, 134, 135, 266; its destruction Sherman's sole object, 133-134; strength of, at Dalton, 135; its position at Resaca, *ib.*; under command of Hood, 136; repulsed at Allatoona Pass, 138; in position at Gadsden, Ala., *ib.*; not destroyed by Sherman, 134, 140-141; position at Florence, 140; defeated at Franklin, Nov. 30, 1864, 142, 143; defeated at Nashville, Dec. 15, 143-144; nearly destroyed by Thomas, 144; Sherman confronted by remnants of, 145.
- Army of the Tennessee, Union: at its best at Chickamauga, 266; ordered to Chattanooga, 132; Hooker's demonstrations during the crossing of the Tennessee by, 235; brought up to Missionary Ridge by Sherman, 234; its losses not large in that battle, 267; Sherman's connection with, 128; his partiality for, 188; the privilege of taking Atlanta reserved for, 189; its good condition, spring of 1864, 266-267; its troops veterans, 267-268; its self-confidence, 268; enthusiasm caused by successes, *ib.*; a model army, *ib.*; its composition, 267; its unity preserved, *ib.*; Sherman idolized by, *ib.*; its battle record, *ib.*; Grant, Sherman, and McPherson its most distinguished heroes, 129.
- Artillery, U. S. Army, 3d regt., Thomas' connection with, 1840-1855, 167-169.
- Artillery, the development of the service, during the civil war, 263; might have been better, *ib.*; natural aptitude of American soldier for, *ib.*; distinction attained by officers of the corps of, *ib.*; officers never accorded the rank to which they were entitled, *ib.*; indifference of Congress to the service, *ib.*
- Atlanta, Ga., the capture of, not Sherman's object, 134, 136; his neglect of details in battles near, July, 1864, 257; the privilege of capture of, reserved for Army of the Tennessee, 189; not captured July 22, 1864, 189; abandoned by Confederates Sept. 1, 1864, 189; occupied by Sherman, Sept. 2, 1864, 136, 137, 189; 190; the political character of his letters to mayor of, 150; railroad to Chattanooga threatened, Sept., 1864, 138; cut by Hood, Oct., *ib.*; repaired by Sherman, *ib.*, 139; Thomas sent to Tennessee from, Sept. 29, 1864, 191; its little value while Hood was unconquered, 136, 137, 138, 139; its abandonment contemplated, 140, 146; Sherman's army began its march to the sea from, Nov. 15, 1864, 241.
- Atlanta Campaign, begun May, 1864, 133; Sherman's abilities displayed in, 151; 239; Lincoln's support of Sherman in, 254; the skilful strategy of, 256; Sherman did not rely on cavalry in, 260; the value its service might have been in, *ib.*; the integrity of organization of Sherman's army preserved from Dalton to, 267; Thomas thought by Grant to have

- been less competent than Sherman for command of, 206-207.
- Atlantic seaboard of the U. S., a reasonably effective blockade maintained during civil war on, 271.
- Augusta, Ga., the capture of, not Sherman's object, 134; its abandonment advocated 1865, by Beauregard, 18; evacuated, 19.
- Ansterlitz, compared to Chattanooga, 133.
- Averysboro', N. C., engagement at, March 16, 1865, 145; Johnston's feeble blow at, 19.
- Bache, H., Maj., U. S. A., Humphreys with, in building lighthouses, 76.
- Badeau, A., his comment on value of success at Fort Donelson, 25; cited as to Grant's reverse at Holly Springs, 30; opinion of Lee's army, 34; his overestimates of Grant, 30, 35, 36, 37, 42; an injustice to Grant, *ib.*; poor opinion of Lee as a soldier, 35, 36, 42.
- Bailey, J. B., Professor, U. S. Military Academy, a graduate of West Point, 75.
- Baird, A., Brig.-Gen., U. S. V., in command 1st division, 14th Corps, left wing, battle of Chickamauga, his position Sept. 19, 222; attacked by Polk, Sept. 20, 224; Wood ordered by Thomas to the support of, 227; in command of 3d division, 14th Corps, at Missionary Ridge, his division sent to re-enforce Sherman, but was not required, 236; he took position on Thomas' left, *ib.*; evidence in his report that Grant wished the Ridge to be assaulted, 237.
- Balaklava, railroad built by the English from, during Crimean War, 270; the cavalry charge at, 40, 156.
- Baltimore, Md., saved by McClellan, 118.
- Banks, N. P., Maj.-Gen., U. S. V., called to oppose Jackson in Shenandoah Valley, 107-108; Grant urged to join, 233; in Louisiana, May, 1863, *ib.*; did not remain in active command till close of the war, 247.
- Barlow, F. C., Bvt. Maj.-Gen., U. S. V., as Col., 61st N. Y. V., 1st brigade, 1st division, 2d Corps, 1862, 59; High Bridge over Appomattox, saved from destruction by, April 7, 1865, 92; his division in pursuit of Lee directed towards Farmville, 93.
- Barnard, J. G., Bvt. Maj.-Gen., U. S. A., a graduate of West Point, 75, 76; Chief Engineer, Army of the Potomac, 1861-1862, 102; his letter to McClellan of March 20, 1862, concerning naval co-operation, 102-103, 104.
- Barnes, J., Bvt. Maj.-Gen., U. S. V., a graduate of West Point, 75.
- Batchelder, R. N., Brig.-Gen., Quartermaster-General, U. S. A., his service as Col., U. S. V., with Hancock, 53; on Hancock's staff, 57.
- Baton Rouge, La., Gen. Williams at, August, 1862, 28.
- Beatty, J., Brig.-Gen., U. S. V., in command of 1st brigade, 2d division, 14th Corps, his brigade joined Thomas before battle of Chickamauga, Sept. 20, 223.
- Beauregard, G. T., General, C. S. A., Roman's Life of, reviewed, 3-20; his capture of Fort Sumter, 4, 5; his project against Washington, July, 1861, 5-6; in Sept., 17; in command at Manassas, 1861, 5; urged the junction of Johnston's forces with his own, 5, 6, 7; battle of Bull Run, 1861, 4, 5-7; his claim of victory at Bull Run, incorrect, 26; pursuit of McDowell not entertained by, 7; urged increase of army, *ib.*; sent to the West, *ib.*; his plans for campaign, 7-8; did all he could, 8; his plan to surprise Grant at Pittsburg Landing, 129; in command, April 7, battle of Shiloh, 4, 8, 26; defeated, 26; Bragg's report to, of horrible condition of army, April 7, 232-233; Corinth evacuated by, May 30, 1862, 8; in command at Charleston, Sept., 1862, *ib.*; his defence of Fort Sumter, 1861, 4; in 1863, 8; aided by Hunter's faulty plan, 9; employed in defence of Richmond April, 1864, 10, 11; his advice disregarded, 11; given leisure by Butler to collect forces, 11; Butler bottled up by, 11-12; his plan of campaign, May 18, 12-13; disregarded, 13, 13 note; its probable effect, 13-14; defence of Petersburg, 1864, 4; his memorandum of June 9, 14; his strength, June 15, 15; his skilful tactics at Petersburg, 16; Grant's movement on Petersburg foreseen by, 14; his weakened forces, *ib.*; called on Bragg for re-enforcements, *ib.*; his calls for re-enforcements disregarded, 16; the evacuation of Petersburg his alternative, 17; re-enforced by

- Lee, June 18, *ib.*; his good dispositions of forces at Petersburg, *ib.*; at Petersburg, July 30, 18; his advice not heeded, 1864-1865, 256; given command in the West, 1864, 18; in co-operation with Hood, at Florence, Ala., Nov., 1864, 140; his plans conjectured to be directed towards Nashville, Nov., 1864, 241; Sherman believed he would be forced to follow to Georgia, *ib.*; Thomas without fear of harm from, 241; with Johnston in spring of 1865, operating against Sherman, 18; superseded by Johnston, 19; battle of Greensboro', 4; interview with Davis and Cabinet, at Greensboro', 19; his plan to continue the war, 18; disregarded, 19; his merits as a commander, 4, 6; not of high rank as a soldier, 26; his characteristics, 6; distrusted by Davis, *ib.*, 16.
- Beckwith, A., Bvt. Maj.-Gen., U. S. A., Sherman's letter of Oct. 19, 1864, to, 146.
- Belmont, Mo., Grant's engagement at, Nov. 11, 1861, 24; purposeless, *ib.*; 29; not glorious, 230; the reasons why, *ib.*; the importance of results of, *ib.*; a tactical success, *ib.*; Union losses, 34.
- Benjamin, J. P., Sec'y of State, C. S. A., at Greensboro' conference, 19.
- Bentonville, N. C., Sherman's engagement March 20-21, 1865, at, 145; his over-confidence, 204; Johnston's blow feeble at, 19.
- Bermuda Hundred, Va., Butler landed at, May 4, 1864, 11; position of Union troops at, *ib.*; Union forces bottled up, 12; 18th Corps taken to Cold Harbor from, 13; sent back to, 14; Johnston's division before, *ib.*; supposed to be in Grant's scheme against Petersburg, 14; number of men transported by railroad, 1864-1865, from, 272.
- Berry, H. G., Brig.-Gen., U. S. V., succeeded by Humphreys in command of 2d division, 3d Corps, Feb. 5, 1863, 84.
- Bevell's, or Bevell's, Bridge, over Appomattox River, one of the two roads of escape left for Lee, April 2, 1865, 91.
- Bingham, H. H., Major, U. S. V., Judge Advocate, on Hancock's staff, 57.
- Blackburn's Ford, Bull Run, in McDowell's plan, July, 1861, 7.
- Black Horse Cavalry, Payne's, Confederate, its effect at Bull Run, 257.
- Bledsoe, A. T., Assist. Sec'y of War, C. S. A., a graduate of West Point, 75.
- Blenker, L. M., appointed Brig.-Gen., U. S. V., May 17, 1861, 174.
- Blockade, the incredulity of foreign powers as to its maintenance by the U. S., 268; a navy created for the purpose, 271; made reasonably effective, *ib.*
- Blue Ridge, Va., Lee's provision to guard passes of, in advance to Gettysburg, 160.
- Boydton Road, Va., expedition of Oct., 1864, to, 66, 87.
- Booneville, Mo., battle of, July 1, 1862, the first planned by Sheridan, 204.
- Boston, Mass., Fort Independence, Thomas stationed at, 1850, 168.
- Bowen, J. S., Brig.-Gen., C. S. A., defeated by Grant, May 1, 1863, at Port Gibson, 233.
- Bowling Green, Ky., A. S. Johnston at, Jan., 1862, 177.
- Bragg, B., Gen. C. S. A., declined appointment of Major in 2d U. S. Cavalry, 1855, 170; joined the Confederate army, 171; in command of 2d Army Corps at Shiloh, statement as to Union attack, April 6, 1862, 232; his report of horrible state of the army after Shiloh, *ib.*; Buell's movement to attack him at Perryville, 216; repulsed by Buell's left wing, Oct. 8, 1862, 217; his strength at Perryville, 217; his loss, *ib.*; Rosecrans' movement, Dec., 1862, to attack, *ib.*; battle of Stone's River, Dec. 31, 1862-Jan. 3, 1863, 217-220; his strength, 218; his position, *ib.*; his plan to attack Union right, *ib.*; gravity of his attack, *ib.*; defeated, 179-180, 219; his retreat from, 180; forced into Chattanooga, 181; re-enforced by Longstreet, 131; his retreat, Sept., 1863, from Chattanooga to Lafayette, 220; believed by Rosecrans to be retreating to Rome, *ib.*; pursuit of, *ib.*; believed to have been re-enforced by Johnston, 220; and to be waiting, Sept. 11, for re-enforcements from Va., *ib.*; encountered, Sept. 19, in position on Chickamauga River, *ib.*; his intention to block road to Chattanooga questioned, 221-222, 223; his attack on Thomas, 221; the attack failed, *ib.*;

- his dispositions for battle of Sept. 20, 223; his right wing under Polk, *ib.*; his left wing under Longstreet, *ib.*; the battle of Sept. 20, 224-229; strength of right wing, 225; his loss Sept. 19, *ib.*; the irruption of his forces on Thomas' right, 227; damage done by, *ib.*; Longstreet's attack on Thomas, 228; defeated, 181-182; strength of his left wing, 228; total of his force, *ib.*; his loss, 182; his position on Missionary Ridge, taken after Chickamauga, 234; Grant's plans against, 33; plan of attack issued Nov. 18, 234; battle of Missionary Ridge, Nov. 25, 184-187, 234-238; objects of attacks of Hooker and Sherman on his flanks, 132, 184; reported, Nov. 22, as retreating, 184; Thomas ordered to ascertain if he was retreating, Nov. 23, 235; his advanced line seized by Thomas, *ib.*; his forces driven from Orchard Knob, Nov. 23, 184; his left on Lookout Mountain turned by Hooker, 33; his position on the Ridge captured by assault of Thomas' forces, Nov. 25, 33, 132, 184, 185, 186, 187; plan to cut off his retreat in Chickamauga Valley, 185; his loss on Missionary Ridge, *ib.*; his statement concerning the strength of his position, 186; his Army of the Tennessee depleted after Missionary Ridge, 266; superseded by Johnston in command, *ib.*; his command in Virginia, April, 1864, 10; Beauregard's prognostications of Grant's plans, June 9, 1864, addressed to, 14; not an obstinate antagonist, 34; fighting him, not like fighting Lee, *ib.*; always defeated, 34.
- Brandy Station, or Fleetwood, cavalry attacks at, 156-157, 159.
- Brannan, J. M., Brig.-Gen., U. S. V., in command of 3d division, 14th Corps, left wing, at battle of Chickamauga, his position, Sept. 19, 222; at Thomas' disposition, Sept. 20, 224-225; the fatal message as to rectification of his line, 226; his division in its proper place, *ib.*; the unfortunate effect of the message, 227-230; that his division moved to the front was known to Thomas, 230, 230 note, 244.
- Breckinridge, J. C., Maj.-Gen., C. S. A., his conspiracy to capture Kentucky state arms, frustrated by Thomas, 175; his report of demoralization of his troops after Shiloh, April 8, 1862, 233; his division shattered by Thomas at Stone's River, 180; at battle of Missionary Ridge, 233 note 4; as Sec'y of War at the Greensboro' council on the lost cause, 19.
- Bridgeport, Ala., short route from Chattanooga attained, 183.
- Bristoe Station, Va., battle at, Oct. 14, 1863, 87.
- Brock Road Junction, Va., attempt of A. P. Hill to seize, May 5, 1864, 62.
- Brooke, J. R., Brig.-Gen., U. S. V., a Col. in command of 4th brigade, 1st division, 2d Corps, 1863, 59; in veteran corps, organized by Hancock, 1864-1865, 66.
- Brotherton's Farm, Union right wing near, Sept. 20, 1863, 226.
- Brown, J. C., Brig.-Gen., C. S. A., of Stevenson's division, at Missionary Ridge, 238 note 3.
- Brown's Ferry on Tenn. River, Confederates dislodged from, by Thomas, Oct. 27, 1863, 183; Union loss at, *ib.*
- Brownson, E. B., Capt., U. S. V., on Hancock's staff, 57.
- Bryan, G., Brig.-Gen., C. S. A., his brigade, of Longstreet's division, not present at Chickamauga, 228 note.
- Buckner, S. B., Maj.-Gen., C. S. A., his scheme to capture the state arms of Kentucky, frustrated by Thomas, 175; Fort Donelson surrendered by, Feb. 16, 1862, 25, 231; the number of men surrendered, *ib.*; in battle of Missionary Ridge, 238 note 1.
- Buell, D. C., Maj.-Gen., U. S. V., in command of Army of the Cumberland, Nov. 15, 1861, 128; his line under Thomas in Kentucky, Nov., 1862, 213; Thomas ordered, Dec. 29, to Mill Springs, 213; his promotions after Logan's Cross Roads, 215; ordered to join Grant on the Tennessee, 26, 128; his march begun March 18, 232; his coming presumably known to Johnston, *ib.*; within ten miles of Grant, April 5, *ib.*; Confederate plan to attack, before his arrival, 8, 26; his participation in the battle, April 7, 27, 130, 231, 250; his share in the victory, 44; his recommendation of Thomas to rank of Maj.-Gen., 178; Thomas rejoined him June, 1862, *ib.*; Chattanooga his objective, Sept., 1862, 179; at Louisville,



- Oct. 1, *ib.*; superseded by Thomas, *ib.*; Thomas having declined, he remained in command, *ib.*; Thomas appointed second in command by, 216; the battle of Perryville, Oct. 8, 1862, 179; his orders to Thomas as to Perryville, 216-217; being ill took no part in battle, 217; his strength then, *ib.*; superseded by Rosecrans, Oct. 30, 179, 216; as an organizer, compared with McClellan, 122; one of the heroes of the Army of the Cumberland, 129; not in active command after Oct., 1862, 247.
- Buena Vista, battle, Feb. 22-23, 1847, Thomas' distinguished service at, 168-169.
- Buford, J., Maj.-Gen., U. S. V., his distinguished cavalry service, 157; his signal services, July 1 and 3, 1863, Gettysburg campaign, 258-259.
- Bull Run, Va., battle of 1861, 4, 5-7, 177; Union loss at, 34; awakening to gravity of the war at the North after, 248; Sherman in command of brigade at, 128, 239; Stuart at, 157; effect of Confederate Black Horse Cavalry at, 257; Patterson made the scapegoat of disaster at, 174; fighting at Fort Donelson compared with, 25.
- Bull Run, second battle, 1862, 100; McClellan resented the attribution of defeat to him, 119.
- Bureau of Topographical Engineers, Humphreys attached to, 76.
- Burkesville, Va., road of escape to Lee barred there, April 4, 1865, 91.
- Burnside, A. E., Maj.-Gen., U. S. V., given command of Army of the Potomac, Nov. 10, 1862, 121; not suited to the position, *ib.*; his failure at Antietam, *ib.*; his mine at Petersburg, 63; Humphreys recommended for promotion by, 82.
- Butler, B. F., Maj.-Gen., U. S. V., his expedition into Virginia, in command of Army of the James, 1864, 10; landed at Bermuda Hundred, May 4, 11, 38; "bottled up," 12, 39; Beauregard's plan against, in event of capture of Petersburg by, 12; Grant's orders to, indefinite, 38, 39; his position and continuance in the army due to political influence, 254-255; not an able or patriotic man, 254.
- Buzzard Roost, Ga., in Thomas' project against Johnston, 1864, 188; in Sherman's operations, *ib.*
- Cæsar, Grant in comparison with, 36; Humphreys in contrast to, 82; Thomas lacked his audacity, 204; the Welsh not conquered by, 167.
- Cairo, Ills., Grant left, Feb. 2, 1862, for Fort Henry, 231.
- Caldwell, J. C., Brig.-Gen., U. S. V., in command of 1st brigade, 2d Corps, at Fredericksburg, 1862, 59.
- California, Sherman served in, during Mexican War, 128; Thomas stationed at Fort Yuma, 1854-1855, in, 170.
- Camp Jackson, St. Louis, broken up by Lyon, May, 1861, 175.
- Carlisle Barracks, Pa., Thomas ordered to, April 10, 1861, 172; his renewal of oath of allegiance at, *ib.*
- Carroll, S. S., Bvt. Maj.-Gen., U. S. A., in veteran corps organized by Hancock, 1864-1865, 66.
- Cashtown, Pa., visited by Stuart in raid of Oct., 1862, 158.
- Cass, G. W., a graduate of West Point, 75.
- Cavalry, its function in warfare, 156; development of, during the rebellion, *ib.*, 157, 159, 257-258; raids of, futile, 258, 260-262; improved by Hooker, 160, 260-262; unfortunately employed by Hooker in Chaneevorsville campaign, 258; good use of, made by Meade in Gettysburg campaign, *ib.*; Buford's services with, July 1 and 3, 1863, 258-259; mistaken use of, by Grant, 1864, 259; Sherman's indifference to, 260; treated with indignity during Atlanta campaign, 194; its fighting qualities minimized by Sherman, *ib.*; employed by Thomas against fortified lines at Nashville, *ib.*; its strength, *ib.*; its energetic commanders, *ib.*; its services in retarding Hood's advance, *ib.*; Forrest defeated at Franklin by, *ib.*; Thomas' use of, 195; organized and commanded by Wilson in Thomas' 1864 campaign, 191; his raid Alabama and Georgia, 1864, with, *ib.*; Lee's mistaken use of, 260-261; Lee not conquered until there was a proper co-operation of infantry and, 262-263; improved under Sheridan, 162; its strength, 1864, *ib.*; the success of Sheridan in Appomattox campaign a demonstration of the best use of, 259, 262; his force displayed the perfection of the use of, 262; its recognition at close of the war, 260.

- Cavalry, U. S. Army, 1st regt., 1855, Sumner. Colonel of, J. E. Johnston, Lt. Col., Emory and Sedgwick, Majors, 170; 2d regt., 1855, A. S. Johnston, Colonel, R. E. Lee, Lieut.-Col., Hardee and Thomas, Majors, 170; twenty-four of its officers entered rebel service, *ib.*
- Cemetery Ridge, Gettysburg, pictured in battle of July 3, 49-51; Hancock wounded at, 50; Humphreys' position at, 84; Pickett repulsed at, 182.
- Chambersburg, Pa., visited by Stuart in his Oct., 1862, raid, 158.
- Champion Hill, Miss., battle of May 16, 1863, mentioned, 18.
- Chancellor House, Hancock's position at, 59; Humphreys' affair at, 83.
- Chancellorsville, Va., battle of May 2-4, 1863, Hancock's service at, May 3, 59; Hooker's gross mismanagement at, 159; his mistaken employment of cavalry in the campaign, 258; Humphreys' services at, 82, 83; Union loss at, 34; A. P. Hill and Jackson wounded at, 158; Stuart given command of Jackson's corps at, *ib.*
- Chapin's Farm, near Richmond, 63.
- Charles City Cross Roads, Va., in Grant's movement on Petersburg, 14.
- Charleston, S. C., defended by Beauregard, 1861, 4; in 1862, 8; Hunter in command before, 9; might have been taken, 1863, 9; Union operations discontinued, 1864, 9-10; troops called to Richmond from, May, 1864, 11; its abandonment advocated, 1865, by Beauregard, 18; his advice not entertained, 19; delayed evacuation of, *ib.*; evacuated, 1865, 9, 19; Sherman thought Columbia "as bad as," 147; in Beauregard's opinion, only a military position, 5; its possession of little value to the British, 134.
- Chattahoochee River, in Sherman's plans, autumn of 1864, 137.
- Chattanooga, Tenn., Buell's destination, not reached Oct. 1, 1862, 179; Thomas' plan of advance to, ignored, *ib.*; Rosecrans' advance on, from Murfreesboro' begun June 24, 1863, 181; the Confederates forced into, *ib.*; Bragg's communications at, threatened Sept. 8, 220; his retreat from, Sept. 8, *ib.*; occupied by Rosecrans, Sept. 9, *ib.*; pursuit of Bragg from, *ib.*; Rosecrans' movement to Chickamauga River from, *ib.*; Bragg's intention to block road to, Sept. 19-20, questioned, 221-223; the roads to, 223; Bragg's position overlooking, taken after Chickamauga, 234; the criticism of choice of Grant for supreme command at, instead of Thomas, discussed, 230; Thomas chosen by Grant for command at, 216; the problem of supplying army at, solved by Thomas, 183; the services of W. F. Smith at, 183, 255; Grant arrived at, Oct. 23, 1863, 234; his operations at, 32-34; his plan to concentrate his troops in valley, on Thomas' left flank, 235; his orders for attack on Bragg at, Nov. 18, *ib.*; battle of, Nov. 23-26, 1863, 131-133, 183-187; see Missionary Ridge; a base of supplies for Sherman, 136; railroad to Atlanta cut and repaired, 138, 139; distance from Florence, Ala., 140; exposed by Sherman to capture by Hood, 144; Thomas thought by Grant less competent than Sherman for command of movement to Atlanta from, 206-207; 129, 146, 241.
- Cheatham, B. F., Maj.-Gen., C. S. A., strength of his division at Chickamauga, 228.
- Cherubusco, Hancock brevetted for gallantry at, 51.
- Chesapeake Bay, in McClellan's plan of campaign, 101.
- Chesapeake, U. S. man-of-war, built by D. Humphreys, 74.
- Chester, W. H., Capt., U. S. V., mortally wounded at Gettysburg, 85.
- Chicago, Ills., Remmon of Western Armies, Dec., 1868, at, 198.
- Chickahominy River, Va., 12, 57, 61, 114; concerned in failure of McClellan's campaign, 116, 117; Grant's movement on, June, 1864, 14.
- Chickamauga, battle of, Sept. 19-20, 1863, 131, 181-182, 220-230; movement to, begun Sept. 18, 220-221; the movement timely, 221; the left wing, commanded by Thomas at, 221, 230; the battle brought on by an attack not ordered by Thomas, 181, 205, 221; met by a counter attack near Reed's Bridge, 221; Bragg's intention to block road to Chattanooga questioned, 221-222; position of Union forces, Sept. 19, 222; the enemy repulsed, 221; the plan of battle of Sept. 20, adopted in council, night of Sept. 19, 222;

- dispositions changed by Thomas' wish early Sept. 20, 222; Thomas reinforced, 223; attack Sept. 20, begun by Polk on Thomas' extreme left, 224; extended to his entire line, *ib.*; attack everywhere repulsed, *ib.*; attack most serious on Baird, *ib.*; re-enforcements called for, and sent, 224-226; Confederates penetrated the line prior to 11 A. M., *ib.*; strength of Union left wing Sept. 20, 225; strength of Confederate force opposed to, 225; mistaken message carried to Rosecrans by one of Thomas' aides, 226; misfortune caused thereby, in removal of Wood's division from Union line, 227-230; the irruption of enemy in gap left by Wood's movement, 227; the Union forces swept away by Hood, *ib.*, 228; Sheridan moving to left wing struck and forced back, 227; Thomas' right assaulted by Longstreet, about 2 P. M., 228; this assault resisted until 5.30 P. M., 228-229; the greatest qualities displayed in this defence by Thomas, 184, 229; his retreat to Rossville, *ib.*; the attacks on Thomas in retreat unavailing, *ib.*; his great services at, *ib.*; his faculty for meeting emergencies, instanced at, 205; cost of the battle to the Confederates, 266; both armies of the West at their best at, *ib.*; honors due to memory of, *ib.*; Tactical Study of the Battlefield of, its legend incorrect, 230, 230 note 1, 243-244; position taken by Bragg on Missionary Ridge after, 234; Sherman opposed Nov. 25 by forces which had been at, 186; the Union army the same at Atlanta as at, 267.
- Chickamauga River, Rosecrans' movement, Sept. 18, 1863, to, 220; Bragg encountered on, Sept. 19, *ib.*; the Union movement timely, 221; in Grant's plans, Nov. 18, for Sherman's advance, 234.
- Chickamauga Valley, plan to cut Bragg's retreat in, 185.
- Chickasaw Bayou, Sherman's action at, Dec. 28, 1862, 29.
- Chocorua, U. S. gunboat, 103.
- Church, A. E., Prof. of Mathematics, U. S. Mil. Acad., a graduate of West Point, 75.
- Cist, H. M., Brig.-Gen., U. S. V., his History of the Army of the Cumberland referred to, 112; his version of story of fatal message at battle of Chickamauga, 229.
- City Point, on James River, Butler's expedition, 1864, to, 10; Gordon's unsuccessful attempt at, 1865, 90; Sheridan at, March 27, 259.
- Clarke, F. H., Bvt. Maj.-Gen., U. S. A., Hancock with, in the West, 51.
- Clay, Henry, jr., classmate of Gen. Humphreys at West Point, 75.
- Cleburne, P. R., Maj.-Gen., C. S. A., opposed to Sherman, battle of Missionary Ridge, his strength, 238; compared with Humphreys, 95.
- Coast Survey Office, Humphreys in charge of, 1844-1849, 77.
- Cold Harbor, Va., battle of, May 31-June 12, 1864, 13, 40, 42, 87; failure of charge at, 62; Grant's movement from June, 12, 13, 14; Grant blocked at, 39.
- Colorado River, Thomas' report on, 1857, 171.
- Columbia, Ky., Union line extended from London to, Nov., 1862, 213.
- Columbia, S. C., Sherman's strategy in movement to, 145; regarded by Sherman "as bad as Charleston," 147; its abandonment advocated, 1865, by Beauregard, 18; evacuated, 19.
- Columbus, Ky., Polk in command at, Nov., 1861, 24; Belmont attacked instead of, *ib.*
- Confederate Govt., failure to comprehend, 1861, the magnitude of the war, 247; its shortsighted financial policy, 248; did not employ cotton to advantage in England, 1861, *ib.*; its inadequate provision of arms and ammunition, *ib.*; inadequate preparations for war, 249; not daunted by disasters of 1862, *ib.*; its treatment of J. E. Johnston, 254.
- Congress of the U. S., see United States Congress.
- Congress, U. S. man-of-war, built by D. Humphreys, 74; destroyed by the Merrimac, 1862, 102.
- Conrad's Ferry, Potomac River, 7, 158.
- Constitution, U. S. man-of-war, built by D. Humphreys, 74.
- Contreras, Hancock brevetted for gallantry at, 51.
- Cooper's Gap, Lookout Mountain, Thomas in position at, 220.
- Corinth, Miss., twenty miles from Pittsburg Landing, Confederates in position at, April, 1862, 232; the purpose of Grant to seize, known to

- Johnston, *ib.*; horrible state of rebel army in retreat from Shiloh to, April 8, *ib.*; Army of the Cumberland reorganized April, 1862, for the advance on, 215; threatened by Grant, April, 1862, 26; Sherman under command of Thomas in advance on, 187; Thomas in command of right wing at siege of, 230; Sherman's successful engagement at, May 28, 239; evacuated by Beauregard, May 30, 1862, 8; an abandoned city when occupied by Halleck, 189; battles of Oct. 3-4, 1862, 233; Grant's conduct of battle criticized, 27; Rosecrans' share in it, *ib.*; the enemy routed by Rosecrans at, Oct. 3-4, 1862, 217; Union loss at, 34; 129, 179.
- Cornwallis, Lord, Lieut.-Gen., British Army, battle of Guilford C. H., 1781, 18; Sherman's position in North Carolina compared to that of, 145.
- Corps of Topographical Engineers, U. S. A., organized, 1838, 76; Humphreys a 1st lieut. of, 1838, *ib.*
- Corpus Christi, Texas, Thomas stationed at, Aug., 1845, 168.
- Corse, J. M., Brig.-Gen., U. S. V., his defence of U. S. post at Allatoona Pass, Oct. 5, 1864, 138.
- Cotton not employed by the Confederacy to advantage in England, 1861, 248.
- Couch, D. N., Maj.-Gen., U. S. V., succeeded by Hancock in command of 2d Corps, 59-60; assigned to Dept. of Susquehanna, 60.
- Crimean War, steam-vessels and railroads employed in, 270.
- Crittenden, G. B., Maj.-Gen., C. S. A., in command before Mill Springs, Jan., 1862, brought re-enforcements across the Cumberland, Jan. 18, 214; attacked Thomas, at Logan's Cross Roads, Jan. 19, 176, 214; his strength, *ib.*; totally defeated, 176-177, 214; termination of his military career, 176.
- Crittenden, T. L., Maj.-Gen., U. S. V., in command 2d Corps Army of the Ohio, ordered to position at Perryville, Oct. 7, 1862, 216; in command of three divisions and of left wing at Stone's River, Dec. 31, 1862-Jan. 3, 1863, 218; ordered to send re-enforcements to right wing, Dec. 31, 218; made front against the enemy, 219; no evidence that he was threatened with disaster, *ib.*; part of his command forced back, *ib.*; Sheridan's aid to left wing, 219; four of his brigades alone of all the army retained their original position, *ib.*; sent to Ringgold, Sept., 1863, 220; ordered to new position, Sept. 11, *ib.*; at battle of Chickamauga, 221; a division of his corps sent to Thomas, 222; his position in reserve for Sept. 20, *ib.*; Thomas directed to employ his forces, 224; Van Cleve's division ordered to support Thomas, 225; propriety of Thomas' call for aid from, questioned, 226; Wood's division of his command, *ib.*
- Crook, G., Bvt. Maj.-Gen., U. S. A., under Thomas' instruction at West Point, 169; his cavalry division cooperated with Humphreys, April 7, 1865, 93.
- Cruft, C., Brig.-Gen., U. S. V., in command of 1st brigade, 2d division, left wing at Stone's River, forced back, 219.
- Crump's Landing, four miles from Pittsburg Landing, Grant's fears of an attack at, April 5, 1862 233.
- Cullum, G. W., Bvt. Maj.-Gen., U. S. A., a graduate of West Point, 1833, 75; his Biographical Register, *ib.*, 76, 203.
- Cumberland, Army or Department of, see Army or Department of the Cumberland.
- Cumberland Mountains, Thomas and McCook sent across, Sept., 1863, in pursuit of Bragg, 220.
- Cumberland River, Confederates cross, to Mill Springs, Jan. 2, 1862, 213; Logan's Cross Roads, twelve miles from, 175.
- Cumberland, U. S. man-of-war, destroyed by the Merrimac, 1862, 102.
- Cumming, A., Brig.-Gen., C. S. A., of Stevenson's division, at Missionary Ridge, 238 notes 3, 5.
- Currituck, U. S. gunboat, 103.
- Curtin, A. G., Governor of Pennsylvania, concurred in recommending call for 300,000 men, 251.
- Curtis, S. R., Maj.-Gen., U. S. V., classmate of Gen. Humphreys at West Point, 75.
- Custer, G. A., Bvt. Maj.-Gen., U. S. V., cut Lee's last supply line and captured supply trains, April 8, 1865, 94; his distinguished cavalry service, 157.
- Cutting, F. B., his advice to McClellan, April, 1862, 111.

- Dahlgren, J. A., Rear Admiral, U. S. N., resisted at Charleston, 4.
- Dalton, Ga., 136; Johnston's position at, 1864, 135, 187; distance from Chattanooga, *ib.*; evacuated by Johnston, 188; the integrity of organization of Sherman's army preserved from, to Atlanta, 267; the value cavalry might have been to Sherman after leaving, 260.
- Dana, C. A., Assist. Sec'y of War, 1864-1866, his report of battle of Chickamauga, Sept. 20, 1863, 181; Stanton's message of approbation to Thomas, through, 183; his report of capture of Missionary Ridge cited, 186-187.
- Davis, G. B., Major U. S. A., in charge of publication of War Records, his letters to Col. Livermore, concerning the "Tactical Study of the Battlefield of Chickamauga," 243-244.
- Davis, J., President, C. S. A., his knowledge of military affairs, 252-254; superior to Lincoln's, *ib.*; educated at West Point, 1824-1828, 252; U. S. Secretary of War, 1853-1857, *ib.*; his appointments, 1855, to cavalry regiments, 170; his relations with Humphreys, 78; his acquaintance with the *personnel* of the U. S. Army, *ib.*; did not approve of scheme to capture Alexandria and Arlington, 1861, 5, 6; pursuit of Union forces after Bull Run, not entertained by, 7; Petersburg demuded of troops, April, 1864, by, 10; called troops to Richmond, May 4, 1864, 11; his order to delay evacuation of Charleston, 19; interview at Greensboro', N. C., with Johnston, *ib.*; unwillingness to give up the cause as lost, 19-20; consented to Johnston's surrender, 20; his administration censured, *ib.*; his interference in the conduct of military affairs, 253; influenced by personal feelings for or against Confederate officers, *ib.*; his conduct did not improve, *ib.*, 254; his relations with Beauregard, 3.
- Davis, J. C., Brig.-Gen., U. S. A., in command of 1st division, 14th Corps, in right wing at Stone's River, forced back by enemy, Dec. 31, 218; his position at Chickamauga, Sept. 20, 226; his attempt to close gap in Union line, 227; in command of 2d division, 14th Corps, under Thomas at Chattanooga, 237.
- Dawes, E. C., Col. U. S. V., his estimate of Confederate strength at Chickamauga cited, 228 note; the estimate criticized, *ib.*
- Daylight, U. S. gunboat, 103.
- Dearing, J., Brig.-Gen., C. S. A., his cavalry at Petersburg, June, 1864, 14.
- Decatur, Tenn., 193; the Union army at Atlanta the same as at, 267.
- Declaration of Independence, John Dickinson and Charles Humphreys opposed, 74.
- Deep Bottom, Va., Hancock's expedition to, July, 1864, 63; the objects of it, *ib.*
- Delaware Bay, Humphreys employed in building lighthouses on, 76.
- Department (Military) of Pennsylvania created, April 27, 1861, 173; Patterson placed in command, *ib.*; Thomas' services in, 173-174.
- Department of the Cumberland, command given Aug. 15, 1861, to Anderson, 128, 174; Sherman assigned to, 128; Thomas assigned to, *ib.*; Sherman in command of, Oct. 8, 1861, 128; succeeded by Buell, *ib.*
- Department of the Mississippi, Halleck in command of, March 11, 1862, 26, 129; Sherman under command of Halleck in, 128.
- Department of the Susquehanna, Couch assigned to, 60.
- De Trobriand, R., Brig.-Gen., U. S. V., his division in pursuit of Lee, April 7, 93.
- Devens, C., Brig.-Gen., U. S. A., cited as to comforts of Army of Potomac, 53.
- Dickinson, John, voted against the Declaration of Independence, 74.
- Dinwiddie, Court House, engagement of March 31, 1865, 90.
- Division of the Mississippi, see Military Division of the Mississippi.
- Donelson, Fort, see Fort Donelson.
- Drewry's or Drury's Bluff, the James River open to, May 12, 1862, 116; Union position at, May, 1864, 11; Hoke's division sent to Petersburg from, June 15, 14.
- Dry Creek Valley Road, followed by Sheridan, Sept. 20, after repulse by Hood, 227.
- Dupont, H., Maj.-Gen., C. S. A., a graduate of West Point, 75.
- Dupont, S. F., Rear Admiral, U. S. N., unsuccessful attack on Fort Sumter, April 7, 1863, 8.

- Early, J., Brig.-Gen., C. S. A. (1861), defeated by Hancock at Williamsburg, 56.
- Edward's Ferry, Potomac River, 7.
- Eighteenth Corps, U. S. A., at battle of Cold Harbor, 13; sent back to Bermuda Hundred, 14; sent against Petersburg, *ib.*; outer works carried by, *ib.*; before Petersburg, July, 1864, 63.
- Electric telegraph, its value in time of war, 269-270; the capabilities of the people of the Northern States in the utilization of, 271.
- Eleventh Corps, U. S. A., crushing assault on, at Chancellorsville, 159; beaten, July 1, at Gettysburg, 161.
- Emmittsburg, Md., visited by Stuart in Oct., 1862, raid, 158.
- Emory, W. H., Bvt. Maj.-Gen., U. S. A., classmate of Gen. Humphreys at West Point, 75; Major, 1st U. S. Cavalry, 1855, 170.
- England, the Confederate Govt. short-sighted as to use of cotton in, 248; its people not military, *ib.*
- Ewell, R. S., Lieut.-Gen., C. S. A., his corps captured by Sheridan, April 6, 1865, 92.
- Ewing, H., Brig.-Gen., U. S. V., in command of 4th division, 15th Corps, under Sherman at Chattanooga, 237.
- Ezra Church, Ga., Thomas in battle of, July 28, 1864, 190.
- Fairfax Court House, Va., McDowell left position at, July 16, 1861, 7.
- Fair Oaks, battle of May 31-June 1, 1862, Union loss at, 34; not fought as intended by Johnston, 256; Hancock not engaged, 57.
- Falling Waters, Va., engagement July 2, 1861, Thomas' participation in, 173; Thomas not under fire at, 213; Confederates repulsed by Abererombie at, *ib.*
- Farmville, Va., Lee's hope to escape at, 92; Longstreet at, April 6, *ib.*; Barlow sent to, April 7, 93; part of the Union army in position south of, *ib.*
- Farmville Heights, Lee compelled by Humphreys to lose time at, 94.
- Farragut, D. G., Rear Admiral, U. S. N., Vicksburg batteries passed by, 27-28.
- Fifth Corps, U. S. A., overwhelmed at Gaines' Mill, 124; under Porter, composed of Pennsylvania troops, 80; Humphreys in command of 3d division, *ib.*; at Petersburg, June 17, 1864, 15, 63; its unimproved opportunity at, 16; commanded by Meade, 84; 3d division broken up, *ib.*; movement on Weldon Railroad, 90; with Sheridan in pursuit of Lee, 91, 92, 94.
- First Corps, U. S. A., beaten, July 1, at Gettysburg, 161.
- Five Forks, Va., battle of April 1, 1865, the victory at, no greater than Thomas' at Nashville, 192; planned by Sheridan, 204; Petersburg and Richmond not abandoned by Lee until after, 149, 263.
- Flat Creek, Va., 91.
- Fleetwood or Brandy Station, cavalry attack at, 156-157, 159.
- Florence, Ala., Hood's movement to, 140; in position at, Nov. 1, 1864, *ib.*, 240.
- Florida, Seminole War, 51, 76, 167; Thomas stationed in, 168.
- Floyd, J. B., Brig.-Gen., C. S. A., his share in surrender of Fort Donelson, 25.
- Foote, A. H., Commodore, U. S. N. (1862), his co-operation with Grant in capture of Forts Henry and Donelson, 129.
- Forrest, N. B., Maj.-Gen., C. S. A., his operations in Sept., 1864, 138; in Oct., 139; Thomas sent to Tennessee to expel, Sept. 29, 191; defeated at battle of Franklin, 194; Humphreys not surpassed by, 95.
- Forsyth, J. W., Lt.-Col. U. S. V., Chief-of-Staff, in episode at Deep Bottom, July 28, 1864, 64.
- Fort Donelson, on Cumberland River, Grant's advance from Fort Henry on, Feb. 12, 1862, 231; his strength, 250; attack of U. S. fleet repulsed, 231; sortie of Confederates repulsed, *ib.*; the commander and part of force escaped Feb. 15, *ib.*; surrendered by Buckner, Feb. 16, 7, 25, 129, 177, 231, 250; number of men surrendered, *ib.*; 250; in its capture the new fleet of U. S. gunboats employed, 271; the evacuation of Kentucky and Tennessee by Confederates the result of its capture, *ib.*; fighting at, compared with Bull Run, 25; an overrated victory, *ib.*; compared with battle of Nashville, 192.
- Fort Henry, Tenn. River, sixty miles from Cairo, 231; Grant started for, Feb., 1862, *ib.*; abandoned by Con-

- federates on approach of U. S. fleet, 7, 25, 129, 231.
- Fort Independence, Boston, Mass., Thomas stationed at, 168.
- Fort Johnson, S. C., 9.
- Fort Monroe, Va., 101; transportation of U. S. troops to, protected, 103; McClellan's confidence in, as a base, 105.
- Fort Stedman, Va., Gordon's attempt on, March, 1865, 90; repulsed by Parke, *ib.*
- Fort Sumter, S. C., captured 1861, by Beauregard, 3, 4, 5; defence of, by Beauregard, 1861, 4; in 1863, 8; might have been taken, 1863, 9; not taken until 1865, *ib.*; 55.
- Fort Yuma, Lower California, Thomas stationed at, 1854, 170, 171.
- Fourth Corps, U. S. A., in engagement of Peach Tree Creek, 190.
- Fourteenth Corps, U. S. A., in engagement of Peach Tree Creek, July 20, 1864, 190; successful assault at Jonesboro', 189.
- Fox, G. V., Assist. Sec'y of the Navy, 103.
- France, the use of railroads to the Prussians in, 1870-1871, 272.
- Frankfort, Ky., conspiracy of rebels to seize the state arms at, frustrated by Thomas, 175.
- Franklin, Tenn., Schofield's withdrawal to, 142; his position at, the cause of risk to Thomas, 241; battle of, Nov. 30, 1864, Thomas' strength at, 142; Hood repulsed at, 142, 143; Forrest defeated at, by Hatch under Wilson, 194.
- Frederick, Md., 80.
- Frederick the Great, Grant in comparison with, 36.
- Fredericksburg, Va., battle of Dec. 13, 1862, Humphreys' charge at, 82, 83, 84; Hancock at, 54, 59; Union loss at, 34; an illustration of the easier task of repelling an assault, 257; mentioned, 59, 122.
- Freeborn, U. S. gunboat, 103.
- Gadsden, Ala., Hood's position at, Oct., 1864, 138.
- Gaines' Mill, Va., battle of June 27, 1862, Hancock's service at, 57; 5th Corps overwhelmed at, 124.
- Garfield, J. A., Brig.-Gen., U. S. V., Rosecrans' Chief-of-Staff, orders to McCook and Sheridan, at Chickamauga, communicated by, 224; orders to Thomas, *ib.*, 228; his report, Sept. 20, 1863, of Thomas at Chickamauga, 181; his description of Thomas, 200.
- Garnett, R. S., Brig.-Gen., C. S. A., in Beauregard's plans, 1861, 6.
- Garrard, I., Col., 7th Ohio Vol. cavalry, with Thomas, 1864, 194.
- Gates, T. B., Col., 80th N. Y., U. S. V., his forces on Cemetery Ridge, July 3, 1863, 50.
- Gaylesville, Ala., Sherman's army concentrated at, 138; danger to Hood in an advance on, 140.
- Georgia, Sherman's march projected, 140-141; executed, 143-144; his projects of devastation in, 146-150; his right to subsistence in, 147-148; his estimate of damage inflicted by him in, 149; Wilson's 1864 raid in, 260.
- Getty, G. W., Brig.-Gen., U. S. A., supported by Hancock, May 5, 1864, 62; in the Wilderness Battle of the Left, May 6, *ib.*
- Gettysburg, Pa., visited in his raid of Oct., 1862, by Stuart, 158; battle of, July 1-3, 1863; Buford's service at, July 3, 258-259; Union left wing commanded by Hancock, 52; 54; battle of Cemetery Ridge, July 3, 1863, 49-51; Hancock wounded, 50, 61; his use of infantry at, 53; his services at, 60-61; Humphreys' services at, 82, 83-86; his march to, 84; his position at, *ib.*; his manoeuvres and gallantry at, 85; a great battle, 86; Pickett's charge, 182; the battle not fought as intended by Lee, 162; 257; his rash assault, 162; Stuart's service at, 157, 159; Union loss at, 34; condition of Army of the Potomac at, 264; Army of Northern Virginia unable to make up for losses at, 265; both armies at their best at, 266.
- Gettysburg Campaign, futility of Stuart's raid during, 160-162, 258, 261-262; excellent use of cavalry made by Meade during, *ib.*; Lee's plans in, 160.
- Gibbon, J., Brig.-Gen., U. S. V., at Cemetery Ridge, July 13, 1863, 50, 60; his services in ending the war, 67.
- Gillmore, Q. A., Maj.-Gen., U. S. V., superseded Hunter in command of Dept. of the South, June 12, 1863, 9; resisted at Charleston, 1863, 4; foiled by Beauregard, *ib.*; employed in Virginia, 1864, 10.
- Gist, S. L., Brig.-Gen., C. S. A., strength

- of his division at Chickamauga, April 20, 225.
- Glenn, Mrs., Rosecrans' headquarters at her house, battle of Chickamauga, 244.
- Gloucester, Va., McClellan's plans for reduction of, 101, 103, 110.
- Goldborough, L. M., Rear Admiral, U. S. N., in command of U. S. fleet in Hampton Roads, 1862, 103, 104; responsible for the neutralization of the Merrimac, 103; his provision of gunboats to McClellan, *ib.*; unable to provide vessels to attack Yorktown, *ib.*, 104, 105.
- Goldsborough, N. C., its abandonment advocated, 1865, by Beauregard, 18; Sherman's brilliant march from Savannah to, 19, 268; his new base at, 145; re-enforced by Schofield at, *ib.*
- Goode's Bridge, over Appomattox River, Va., one of the roads of escape left for Lee April 2, 1865, 91.
- Gordon, C. G., Maj.-Gen., British army, at Khartoum, 115.
- Gordon, J. B., Maj.-Gen., C. S. A., his attempt on Fort Stedman, March 25, 1865, 90; repulsed by Parke, *ib.*; his unsuccessful engagement April 6, 1865, at Sailor's Creek, 92; crossed the Appomattox at High Bridge, *ib.*; compared with Humphreys, 95.
- Gordon's Mill, Ga., Thomas' position, Sept. 19, 1863, on road to Rossville from, 222.
- Gordonsville, Va., 59.
- Govan, D. C., Brig.-Gen., C. S. A., his brigade captured at Jonesboro', 189.
- Government of the Confederacy, see Confederate Government.
- Government of the U. S., see U. S. Government.
- Governor's Island, N. Y., Hancock's death at, Feb. 9, 1886, 66.
- Gracie, A., jr., Brig.-Gen., C. S. A., his brigade at Petersburg, 15.
- Granger, G., Maj.-Gen., U. S. V., at battle of Chickamauga, in reserve, 223; ordered to support Thomas Sept. 20, *ib.*; his position on Missionary Ridge, *ib.*; hurried from Rossville to join Thomas in repelling Longstreet, 228; strength of force brought to aid Thomas, *ib.*
- Grant, U. S., General, U. S. A., the early recognition of his merits due to the partiality of Washburne, 166; discussion of his military ability, 23-46; his affair at Belmont, Nov. 7, 1861, 24; his losses, 34; the battle wanting in glory, 24, 230; the reasons why, *ib.*; the important results of, *ib.*; started Feb. 2, 1862, from Cairo for Fort Henry, 231; Fort Henry abandoned, 25, 129, 231; Fort Donelson invested, Feb. 12, *ib.*; attack by U. S. fleet repulsed, *ib.*; sortie of enemy repulsed, *ib.*; the fort surrendered, Feb. 16, 25, 129, 178, 231; the number of men captured, 231; the strength of, *ib.*; an over-rated victory, 25; important results of, 271; under a cloud, March 4-15, 1862, 27; censured by Halleck, *ib.*; his position, March 10, 1862, at Pittsburg Landing well chosen, 26, 129; his headquarters at Savannah, *ib.*; Buell ordered to join him, 26; Johnston knew that Buell was on the way to join, 232; and that the capture of Corinth was the purpose of, *ib.*; plan of Confederates to attack before Buell's arrival, 8, 26, 129; the battle delayed until Buell was within ten miles of, 232; his strength, April 5, 231; the Confederate strength, *ib.*; at Savannah when the battle began, 26; cause of his absence from Pittsburg Landing, April 6, 233; conference with Buell, April 5, *ib.*; his apprehensions of attack at Crump's Landing, *ib.*; attacked by Johnston, April 6, 4, 26, 130, 231, 250; the attack a surprise, 4, 26, 130, 250; his statement that the army was not surprised distrusted, 26, 130, 132; the charge of surprise refuted by Halleck, 233; the charge disproved by the Record, 231-233; his despatch to Halleck of April 5, 1862, 130, 232; and Sherman's despatch to contain the data for proposition that the Union army was surprised April 6, *ib.*; his stubborn resistance, 130; forced back to Tennessee River, 26, 231; defeated, April 6, 44; re-enforced, he defeated Beauregard, April 7, 230, 250; his success, April 7, caused by Beauregard's shortcomings, 26, 27; his losses, 34, 231; Confederate losses, 230; made second in command to Halleck, April 30, 27, 216; command of a part of the Army of Tennessee given to Thomas, 178; his position anomalous and distasteful, 216; Halleck's slights brooded over, 178; his position improved by Halleck's promotion, 27; his command July-Oct.,



1862, 233; his object to open the Mississippi, 27; the battle of Iuka fought, Sept. 19-20, 1862, 27, 28, 233; his loss at, 34; not to his credit, 27; the battle of Corinth, Oct. 3-4, 1862, 27, 233; his conduct of, criticized, 27; his 1862 campaign against Vicksburg unsuccessful, 233; his reverse at Holly Springs, Dec. 20, 1862, 29-30; his Vicksburg campaign, November, 1862-July, 1863, 27-32, 233; his plans affected by report of project to give command to McClernand, 28, 29, 30; capture of Vicksburg suggested, 28; his overland scheme, 28-29; his plans criticized, 28; no hope of subsistence from country, 29; his plans indefinite, 31; his strength, 234; his advance on, 233; urged by Halleck to join Banks, *ib.*; passed Vicksburg April 12, 1863, *ib.*; captured Port Gibson, May 1, *ib.*; Johnston defeated by, May 14, at Jackson, 234; Pemberton surrendered Vicksburg to, July 4, *ib.*; number of men surrendered, *ib.*; strength of Confederates, *ib.*; his success at Vicksburg aided by his opponent's incapacity, 32; the great success of the war, *ib.*; his superior strategy, 131; unheard of theretofore in the civil war, 234; worthy of the great commanders of history, *ib.*; given command of Military Division of the Mississippi, Oct. 16, 1863, 183, 230, 234; his promotion the reward for Vicksburg, 132; comment on his appointment instead of Thomas, 234; assumed command, Oct. 18, *ib.*; arrived at Chattanooga, Oct. 23, 183, 234; his operations at Chattanooga, Oct. 23-Nov. 25, 32-34, 131-133, 184-187, 234-238; would not wait for attack by Bragg, 32-33; issued orders for attack, Nov. 18, *ib.*, 184, 234; the execution of his order delayed, 184, 185; his plan of attack, 234-236; his plan admirable and skillful, 184; his orders to Thomas, 234-235; his orders to Sherman, 235; his purpose to give Sherman the duty of main attack, 184, 185; the assertion that he intended to give Sherman the chief part in the battle questioned, 236; his intention that Thomas and Sherman should co-operate, 235-236; Thomas ordered to carry rifle-pits at foot of Missionary Ridge, 236; his dispositions at the Ridge, 185; the assault on the Ridge

not intended by him, 33, 185, 187, 236; the assertion that he did not intend to carry the Ridge by Thomas' attack questioned, 236; evidence that Thomas was expected to carry the Ridge, 237; the troops engaged in assault, not of Thomas' corps, and but five weeks under his command, *ib.*; the statement that the battle of Chattanooga was fought according to plan, distrusted, 133, 184-185; sustained, 236-237; the battle displayed no remarkable trait in him, 33; his opponent not obstinate, 34; his losses, *ib.*; made General-in-Chief, March 3, 1864, 10, 187, 238; his plans, 10; Beauregard's plan for defeat of, 12; Butler "bottled up" at Bermuda Hundred, *ib.*; desired W. F. Smith for command of Army of the James, 1864, 255; his orders of April 9, 1864, to Meade to make Lee's army his objective, 134; the correctness of his policy, *ib.*; his advance with Army of the Potomac into Virginia, 133; his strength, 40; attacked by Lee in the Wilderness, 35; his flank movement to Spottsylvania anticipated by chance, 36; his position at Spottsylvania, May, 1864, 12; his mistaken attack on the Sallient, 37; stalemated on the North Anna, 39; blocked at Cold Harbor, *ib.*; battle of Cold Harbor, 13, 14; his mistake at Cold Harbor, 42; his plan against Petersburg, 13; his able transfer to the James, 13, 42, 43; deceived Lee, 14, 16, 17; indefiniteness of his orders as to Petersburg, 38, 39, 43, 88; his chances at Petersburg, 43-44; his scheme to draw Lee's army from Petersburg, 63-65, his failure to make an impression on Lee, in 1864, 37, 38, 40, 41; the character of the campaign, 61-62; paid no heed to James River route, 39; his determination to defeat Lee on northern route, *ib.*; his plans not defined, *ib.*; did not compel Lee to leave his entrenchments, 40; inscrutable as to his intentions for Sheridan, March, 1865, 260; sent Sheridan, March 29, 1865, to Dinwiddie C. H., 90; at Farmville, April 7, 1865, 94; his first letter to Lee, delivered from Humphreys' front, *ib.*; the conditions for capture of Hood at Nashville unlike those for capture of Lee, 192; his attitude to Army of the Potomac and Meade criticized,

87-88; the difficulties involved in a double command, *ib.*; his considerate treatment of Meade, 88; his gradual assumption of control, 89; his system of attrition criticized, 135; his waste of his army in 1864, 267; his losses in five weeks, 40; his losses in first ten weeks, 1864, 38; the improvement in conduct of military affairs, 1864-1865, under, 255; his management criticized, 255-256; a hero in no great military operation, 44; not possessed of true military instinct, 30; causes of his success, 45; disregard of difficulties, 24, 31; preference for a difficult plan, *ib.*; his custom to divide his forces, 27, 28, 38; his neglect of details in battles, 257; his experiments at Vicksburg, 31; a brilliant strategist, 257; his preference for hard blows to manœuvring, 34-35, 39, 40, 135; would not employ strategy, 37; his discovery of the error, 35; compelled to manœuvre, 38; his mistaken use of cavalry, 259; Sheridan's successful use of cavalry in 1865, not due to, *ib.*; his plans for Sheridan not practicable, *ib.*; a great man, 44, 45; an unselfish patriot, 27, 45; his great services, 23; admiration due him, 45; his restless disposition, 24; never absent from post of danger, 26; his courage, 31; his tenacity of purpose, 24; his staying power, 37; a hero of Army of the Tennessee, 129; loyalty of his brother officers and soldiers, 44; Lincoln's support of, 254; possessed of the confidence of the nation, 42, 43; Badeau's overestimates an injustice to, 35, 36, 37, 42; his failures attributed by Badeau to his lieutenants, 35; his position in comparison with great generals of history, 36, 41, 46; his successes due to incapacity of opponents like some of Napoleon's, 32; Humphreys compared with, 95; his underestimate of Lee, 34, 37; his tacit acknowledgment of Lee's superiority, 43; his relations with Sherman: the command of the Department of the Mississippi given to Sherman, 133; the choice of Sherman instead of Thomas, 238; the question discussed, 239; Sherman fought at Corinth, May 28, 1862, in the presence of, 239; his confidence in Sherman, 131; Sherman's unvarying support of Grant, 239; the favorite officer of,

133; his partiality for, 151; his orders to Sherman of April 4, 1864, to make Johnston's army his objective, 133-134; his anxieties because of Hood, 152; the destruction of Hood, Sherman's first duty, 141; Sherman's disregard of orders to destroy Hood, 151; Sherman's propositions to, Sept., 1864, 137, 138, 141; his unwillingness to accede to the "March through Georgia" plan, 141; permission for march given, Nov. 2, 1864, 142, 143; the strengthening of Thomas' army a condition of his consent, 142; data as to the forces taken to Georgia and left with Thomas, 240; his admiration of Sherman's march, 151; Sherman's proposition to devastate Georgia, in letter of Oct. 9, 1864, to, 146; as to South Carolina, in letter of Dec. 18, 146; his campaign in Virginia not affected by Sherman's devastation of South Carolina, 149; Sherman's purpose to join him in Va., 1865, 18; Sherman compared to, 150; his relations with Thomas: claims made to the disparagement of, examined, 211-244; resented Halleck's giving command of right wing of army to Thomas, 178; cause of his misunderstanding with Thomas, *ib.*; Thomas made the victim of his grudge against Halleck, *ib.*; that the giving of command of right wing to Thomas was thought a slight by, questioned, 215-216; that Thomas was made to suffer in consequence, doubted, *ib.*; his prejudice against Thomas, 183; evidence of an absence of prejudice, 216; Thomas held to all the responsibilities at Chattanooga by, 183; appointed to command of Mississippi Department instead of Thomas, 230; his opinion that Rosecrans should be relieved, 182-183; the command of the Army of the Cumberland given by him to Thomas, 230; his statement that the rebel lines in Thomas' front were weakened Nov. 25, disproved, 186; Sherman preferred before Thomas to succeed him in command of Mississippi Dept., 187; advantage which he would have gained had he taken Thomas instead of Sherman into favor, 178; Thomas' plan of Feb. 28, for a movement to Atlanta submitted to, 187; Thomas' refusal of promotion offered

- by Johnson to degrade, 202-203; his estimate of Thomas criticized, 206; his praise of Thomas insufficient, 151-152, 207; Thomas' reputation obscured by, 207; comparison of his services with Thomas', 192, 203; the losses of Thomas compared with those of, 192; his capture of Lee, contrasted with Thomas' failure to cut off Hood's retreat after Nashville, 192-194.
- Greene, N., Maj.-Gen., battle of Guilford C. H., 1781, 18, 134, 145.
- Greensborough, N. C., conference of Confederate government and military commanders at, 19; Confederate army surrendered at, 4, 20.
- Gregg, D. M., Bvt. Maj.-Gen., U. S. V., his opinion of Hancock as a cavalry commander, 53-54; movement of his cavalry, Feb., 1865, 90; his distinguished cavalry service, 157.
- Grenada, Miss., suitable as a *dépôt* in an advance on Vicksburg, 28.
- Gulf of Mexico, a reasonably effective blockade maintained by the U. S. during civil war, in, 271; considered in Sherman's plans, Sept., 1864, 137.
- Guilford Court House, N. C., battle of March 15, 1781, 18.
- Hall, N. J., Col., U. S. V., in command of 3d brigade, 2d division 2d Corps, at Cemetery Ridge, July 3, 1863, 51.
- Halleck, H. W., Maj.-Gen., U. S. A., in command of Department of the Mississippi, March 11-July 11, 1862, 128; Sherman transferred to his command, *ib.*; Forts Henry and Donelson captured by his forces under Grant, 129; accused Grant of disobedience, 27; Buell ordered to Pittsburg Landing by, 129; Grant's despatch of April 5, 1862, to, 130, 232; refuted charge that the army was surprised at Shiloh, 233; the reorganization of Army of the Cumberland, by, 178, 215; recommended Thomas for rank of Maj.-Gen., 215; Thomas given command of right wing of his army by, 178, 215; Grant made second in command, 216; Thomas made by Grant to suffer for faults of, 178; Grant's resentment questioned, 215; Corinth occupied by, May 30, 1862, 8; an abandoned city when captured, 189; Thomas relieved of command of right wing, by, 216; appointed, July 11, 1862, General-in-Chief, 27, 233; Grant urged by, to join Banks, *ib.*; informed by Thomas of success at Brown's Ferry, 183; his orders disregarded by McClellan, 120; Humphreys reprimanded by, 80; reprimand resented and answered, 80-81; no reparation made, 81; his alarm because of Stuart's raid, June-July, 1863, 261; his orders to capture Stuart not obeyed, *ib.*; Meade's letter to, concerning the raid, 161, 261-262; his respect for Sherman increased, 131; Sherman's correspondence with, Sept., 1864, 137; Sherman's proposition to punish South Carolina announced to, Dec. 24, 1864, 147.
- Hamilton, C. S., appointed Brig.-Gen., U. S. V., May 17, 1861, 174.
- Hampton Roads, Goldsborough in command of U. S. fleet in, 1862, 102, 103.
- Hancock, W. S., Maj.-Gen., U. S. A., a cadet at West Point, 1840-1844, 51; in war with Mexico, 51; his Western service, *ib.*; in Seminole War, *ib.*; in border wars in Kansas, *ib.*; in Utah expedition, *ib.*; captain, 1861, stationed at Los Angeles, California, 51, 66; transferred at his own request from California to service in the East, 1861, 55; appointed Sept. 23, Brig.-Gen. of Volunteers, *ib.*; his regard for Volunteers, 56-57; McClellan's epithet for, 56; Volunteer officers on his staff, 57; his service at Williamsburg, 53, 56; not engaged at Fair Oaks, 57; his service at Gaines' Mill, *ib.*; repulse of enemy in retreat to the James, *ib.*; promoted at Antietam to command division, 58; his ready assumption of duty, *ib.*; at Fredericksburg, in assault on Marye's Heights, Dec. 13, 1862, 59; at Chancellorsville, May 3, 1863, *ib.*; succeeded Couch to command of 2d Corps, June 11, 1863, 52, 59-60; responsibilities committed to, by Meade at Gettysburg, 60; his appearance at Cemetery Ridge, July 13, 1863, 50; wounded, 50, 61; effect of his wound, 61, 63, 66; climax of his military career, 60; his services at Gettysburg, *ib.*; character of 1864 campaign unsuited to display of his abilities, 61; his services in the Wilderness, 62; the unsuccessful charge at Cold Harbor, *ib.*;

- the capture of the Salient, *ib.*, 63; crossed James River, June 14, 1864, 14; before Petersburg, June 15, *ib.*; not advised of Grant's purpose to capture Petersburg, 43, 88; his services at Petersburg terminated by outbreak of wound, 63; his expedition to Deep Bottom, July, 1864, 63-64; an incident in the expedition, 64; his vigilance, 65; the disaster at Ream's Station, 66; its effect on him, *ib.*; the expedition to Boydton Road, his last service in the field, 66; relinquished his command, Nov. 26, 1864, 66, 89; succeeded in command of 2d Corps by Humphreys, 89; charged with creation of a corps of veterans, Nov. 27, 1864-Feb. 27, 1865, *ib.*; his high character, 51; his training, 52; as a commander of infantry, 53; his military qualifications, 53-55; his tactical skill, 59; his influence over his men, *ib.*; his consideration for meritorious services, 67; his encouragement of young officers, *ib.*; his faithfulness in execution of his trusts, 66; his credit with A. P. Hill, 67; Badeau's opinion, of, 35; did not surpass Humphreys in courage and professional skill, 95; his death, Feb. 9, 1886, 66.
- Hannibal, his cavalry system like Napoleon's, 156.
- Hardee, W. J., Lieut.-Gen., C. S. A., Major, 2d U. S. Cavalry, 1855, 170; joined the Confederate army, 171; in command of Confederate advance at Shiloh, his statement that hostilities began by Union attack, April 6, 232; Sherman's threat to, in demanding surrender of Savannah, 146; his delay in evacuating Charleston, 19.
- Harney, W. S., Bvt. Maj.-Gen., U. S. A., 51.
- Harper's Ferry, Va., Jackson's movement to Antietam from, 124; McClellan's position near, after Antietam, 120.
- Harpeth River, Tenn., Schofield's retreat to, Nov., 1864, 143.
- Harrison's Landing, Va., 112; McClellan forced to, by Lee and Jackson, 250; McClellan's letter to Lincoln from, 114.
- Harker, C. G., Col. 65th Ohio Infantry, in command of 3d brigade, 1st division, left wing, at Stone's River, ordered to re-enforce right wing, 218.
- Harrow, W., Brig.-Gen., U. S. V., at Cemetery Ridge, July 3, 1863, 51.
- Hatch, E., Brig.-Gen., U. S. A., in command of 5th division, his services in retarding Hood's advance, and at battle of Franklin, 194.
- Hatcher's Run, Va., battle at, Feb. 5-7, 1865, 90.
- Haverford, Pa., the home of General Humphreys' family, 74.
- Hay, J., and J. G. Nicolay, Humphreys given credit by, for service at Malvern Hill, 80.
- Hays, A., Brig.-Gen. U. S. V., at Cemetery Ridge, July 3, 1863, 50, 60.
- Haynes Bluff, Miss., Sherman's unsuccessful attack on, 239.
- Henderson, A., Bvt. Brig.-Gen., U. S. A., Thomas at Monterey, complimented by, 168.
- Henry, Fort, see Fort Henry.
- Hicksford, Va., Lee's *dépôt* of supplies, 1865, 90; communications with, *ent. ib.*
- High Bridge across Appomattox, crossed by Gordon, April 6, 1865, in attempt to escape, 92; saved from destruction by Barlow, April 7, *ib.*; crossed by Lee's pursuers, *ib.*
- Hill, A. P., Lieut.-Gen., C. S. A., in command of Jackson's corps May 2, 1863, at Chancellorsville, 159; wounded there, *ib.*; repulsed by Getty and Hancock, May 5, 1864, in the Wilderness, 62; in the battle of May 6, *ib.*
- Hill, D. H., Lieut.-Gen., C. S. A., defeated at Williamsburg by Hancock, 56; on right flank of Bragg's army Sept. 18, at Chickamauga, 221; his strength and loss at Chickamauga, Sept. 19, 225; under Polk in attack on Thomas, May 20, *ib.*; his statement that the attack failed cited, 226.
- Hindman, T. C., Maj.-Gen., C. S. A., at battle of Missionary Ridge, 238 note 4.
- Hoke, R. F., Maj.-Gen., C. S. A., his division sent from Petersburg to Cold Harbor, June, 1864, 13; sent back, June 15, 14.
- Holly Springs, Miss., Grant's communications cut at, 29, 30.
- Hood, J. B., General, C. S. A., cadet at West Point, 1849-1853, under Thomas' instruction, 169; at battle of Chickamauga, 182; under command of Longstreet Sept. 20,

226; his advance to attack Union right wing, *ib.*; availed of the gap in Union line, attacked rear of Wood's column, 227; Union forces carried away by, *ib.*; Sheridan attacked and forced back by, *ib.*; Col. Daves' estimate of his strength cited and criticized, 228 note; repulsed by Thomas at Peach Tree Creek, 190; his attack on McPherson, *ib.*; his army unconquered, Atlanta of little value to Sherman, 138; superseded Johnston in command of Confederate Army of the Tennessee, June 18, 1864, 136; would not be drawn into a general battle by Sherman, 136; Sherman could not follow him, *ib.*, 140; his own problems, 140; his movement, Oct., 1864, 138; the attack at Allatoona Pass, *ib.*; retired to Gadsden, Ala., *ib.*; evaded battle with Sherman, *ib.*, 139; Sherman's failure to destroy him, 134, 140-141; his destruction a requisite with Grant, 141; Sherman's plan to commit his destruction to Thomas, 141-142; under Beauregard's command, 18; his strength, Nov., 1864, 240, 240 note 5; his movement to Florence, 140, 240; his conference with Beauregard, *ib.*; Sherman unable to conjecture if he would be followed to Georgia by, *ib.*; information of, desired by Sherman before starting on his march, 241; possible consequences had he been followed by, 242; his problem in an invasion of Kentucky, *ib.*; his possible chances on the withdrawal of Sherman into Georgia, 144; his advance into Tenn. retarded by Hatch, 194; his defeat at Franklin, Nov. 30, 1864, 142, 143; his defeat at Nashville, Dec. 15, 143-144, 191-195; 242; his fighting spirited, 192; annihilated by Thomas, 207; his resistance to Thomas as great as Lee's to Grant, 194; not cut off in retreat by Thomas, 192-193; pursuit of, impeded, 193; Steedman prevented from intercepting, *ib.*; his escape, *ib.*, 195; the conditions for his capture unlike those for capture of Lee, 192-193; Thomas' resistance to, and victory over, an evidence of the merit of an American army, 268; the destruction of his army involved the fall of the Gulf States, 141; consequences conjectured, if Sherman had continued his opponent, 151; the

political character of Sherman's letters to, 150.

- Hooker, J., Bvt. Maj.-Gen., U. S. A., Army of the Potomac improved by, 122; the first Union general to value cavalry, 258; his improvement of the cavalry, 160, 258; his uses of cavalry in Chancellorsville campaign a misfortune, 258; his plan at Chancellorsville disapproved by Humphreys, 84; his gross mismanagement at Chancellorsville, 159; his position in advance to Gettysburg not reported to Lee by Stuart, 160; his affair in Lookout Valley, 1863, 183; at battle of Chattanooga, 132; his demonstration to divert enemy while Sherman crossed the Tennessee, Nov. 24, 235; Bragg's left on Lookout Mountain, turned by, 33, 235; his loss, 33; his movement Nov. 25, 236; intended by Grant to cut off Bragg's retreat, 185.
- Howard, O. O., Maj.-Gen., U. S. V., a cadet at West Point, 1850-1854, under Thomas' instruction, 170; commander of 11th Corps, Army of the Cumberland, joined Sherman during battle of Chattanooga, 237.
- Huguenots, Gen. Thomas' mother of a family of, 167; their loyalty to their faith, *ib.*
- Humphreys, A. A., Maj.-Gen., U. S. A., his ancestors and family, 74-75; born, 1810, 75; died, 1883, *ib.*; a cadet at West Point, 1827-1831, *ib.*; his classmates, *ib.*; his service after graduation, 76; in Seminole War, *ib.*; resigned army commission, 1836, *ib.*; employed in building lighthouses, *ib.*; entered Corps of Topog. Engineers, 1838, *ib.*; service in Bureau, *ib.*, 77; bridge built by, 76-77; in Coast Survey office, 77; attained rank of Captain, 1848, *ib.*; survey of Mississippi Delta, *ib.*; loss of health and visit to Europe, *ib.*; survey of railroad route to the Pacific, *ib.*; member of Lighthouse Board, 78; member of commission to examine West Point Academy, *ib.*; his relations with Jeff. Davis, *ib.*; his loyalty, *ib.*; assigned to duty with McClellan, 1861, 79; his rapid promotion to rank of Brig.-Gen. of Volunteers, 79; Chief Topog. Engineers, Peninsular Campaign, *ib.*; selected position on Malvern Hill, *ib.*, 80; mentioned in McClellan's report, 79, given command of 3d division, 5th

- Corps, Sept. 12, 1862, 80; his march to Antietam, 80, 81; censured by Halleck, *ib.*; censure resented by him, *ib.*; demand for court of inquiry, 81; McClellan's misstatement of his time of arrival, *ib.*; his service at Antietam, *ib.*; his services at Fredericksburg, 82, 83; his charge, 82; his assault of Marye's Heights, 82; the most conspicuous figure of that day, *ib.*; recommended for promotion by Burnside, *ib.*; his services at Chancellorsville, 82, 83; his affair at Chancellor House, *ib.*; disapproved of Hooker's conduct of battle, 84; his division in 5th Corps broken up, *ib.*; given command of 2d division, 3d Corps, *ib.*; his march to Gettysburg, 84; his position there, *ib.*; not consulted as to positions, *ib.*; his statement of severity of fire, *ib.*; his manœuvres, 85; his bravery and equanimity in the battle, *ib.*; his care of Col. Chester, *ib.*; his mishap, *ib.*; appointed Chief-of-Staff to Meade, 86; his services in that position, 86-89; his book Virginia Campaign of 1864-1865, cited as to the Wilderness, 87; as to pursuit of Lee to Appomattox, 94; relations between Meade and, 88; the model Chief-of-Staff, 89; given the command of 2d Corps, Nov. 26, 1864, 89; his letter of acceptance, *ib.*; his former relations to the Corps, *ib.*; project against Lee's supply-line communicated to Wilson by, 90; executed, Feb. 6, 1865, by, *ib.*; his position in Weldon Railroad affair, *ib.*; with Wright, succeeded in affair on Quaker Road, *ib.*; in engagement on White Oak Road, March 31, 91; the Crow House redoubt carried by, April 2, *ib.*; gained possession of the Southside Railroad at Sutherland's Station, *ib.*; in pursuit of Lee, *ib.*; his running fight, April 6, 92; battle of Sailor's Creek, *ib.*; on the heels of Lee at High Bridge, April 7, *ib.*; Union army divided by the Appomattox, 93; his engagement of April 7, *ib.*; received assistance from Crook only, *ib.*; his hope to capture Lee, April 7, *ib.*; the importance of his movement to prevent Lee's escape, *ib.*, 94; Grant's letter to Lee demanding surrender, delivered from, *ib.*; his pursuit April 8, *ib.*; the hero of the infantry in the pursuit of Lee, 95; 67; his position among commanders, 95; his extraordinary abilities, *ib.*, 96; his services subsequent to the war as Chief Engineer of the Army, *ib.*; his personal appearance, 81; his character, *ib.*, 83; his gallantry, 82, 83, 85, 86; his patriotism, 83; a master of logistics, 53; his qualities as a fighter, 83.
- Humphreys, Charles, member of Continental Congress, 74.
- Humphreys, Clement, 74.
- Humphreys, Daniel, the General's great-great grandfather, a Welsh Quaker, 74.
- Humphreys, Joshua, the General's grandfather, first naval constructor of the U. S., 74.
- Humphreys, Samuel, the General's father, Chief Constructor, U. S. Navy, 74-75; declined to expatriate himself, 75.
- Hunt, H. J., Bvt. Maj.-Gen., U. S. A., Chief of Artillery, Army of the Potomac, his paper on the artillery service cited, 263; accompanied Humphreys in selecting position on Malvern Hill, 79.
- Hunter, D., Bvt. Maj.-Gen., U. S. A., in command, Jan. 21-June 3, 1863; before Charleston, 9; his plans thought to be faulty by Beauregard, *ib.*
- Hurlbut, S. A., Maj.-Gen., U. S. V., at Army Reunion, Chicago, 1868, 198.
- Illinois, maintained its regimental organizations through the war, 265.
- Independence, Fort, see Fort Independence.
- Indiana Volunteers, with Hatch, 1864, 194.
- Infantry, the development of, during the Civil War, 263-268; the improvement of efficiency of, 264; highest degree reached in 1863, *ib.*; the advantage which would have been gained by mixing green troops with veterans, 264-265; the advantage of preservation of veteran regiment organizations, 265.
- Island Belle, U. S. gunboat, 103.
- Island No. 10, Mississippi River opened to, April 1, 1862, 7.
- Italy, war with Austria, 1859, railroads used during, 270.
- Iuka, battle at, Sept. 19, 1862, 233; Grant's conduct of, criticized, 27, 28; Union losses, 34.
- Ivanoff, T., Russian Consul-General

- at Philadelphia, offered Samuel Humphreys appointment in Russia, 75.
- Jackson, Camp, St. Louis, broken up by Lyon, 175.
- Jackson, Miss., Johnston defeated by Grant at, May 14, 1863, and city captured, 234; Sherman's participation in the siege and battle of, 239.
- Jackson, T. J., "Stonewall," Lieut.-Gen., C. S. A., repulsed by Abercrombie at Falling Waters, July 2, 1861, 173, 213; his campaign in the Shenandoah Valley, 1862, 108, 116, 117; his strategy in the campaign, 1862, 256; disconcerted plans of U. S. Govt., 250; with Lee caused McClellan's retreat to the James, *ib.*; at Antietam, 124; wounded at Chancellorsville, 159; after A. P. Hill was wounded, the command of Corps given to Stuart, *ib.*; his military instinct, 30; would not have yielded Vicksburg readily, 32; compared with McClellan, 123; Stuart commended at Bull Run by, 157; would not have made Stuart's mistake in Gettysburg campaign, 161.
- James, Army of, see Army of the James.
- James Island, Charleston Harbor, might have been taken, 1863, 9.
- James River, Va., closed by rebel ram Merrimac, 105, 115; McClellan's assumption that the navy could open, 105, 106, 110; opened by destruction of the Merrimac, May 11, 1862, 116; his reason for not taking it as a line of advance, 116-117; his best line, *ib.*; his movement to, June, 1862, 57; forced to, by Lee and Jackson, 250; its value as a route to Richmond, pointed out by McClellan, 39; Butler not instructed definitely to make his base on, 38; passage of, by Army of Potomac, 1864, 13, 42, 43; crossed by the 2d Corps, June 14, 14; Hancock's expeditions to, 1864, 63; Grant's plans for employment of Sheridan on, 1865, 259; City Point on, 10; 11, 13, 87.
- Jerusalem Plank Road, open to Petersburg for the 5th Corps, June 16-17 1864, 16, 17.
- Jetersville, Va., Sheridan pursued Lee on the road to, April 2, 1865, 91; and was joined there by 2d and 6th Corps, *ib.*
- Johnson, A., President, chosen Vice-President because he was a Southerner, 166; Thomas nominated by; for rank of Lieutenant-General and General, Feb., 1868, 202-203; Thomas' letter to, declining the rank, 203; his purpose to degrade Grant, *ib.*
- Johnson, Fort, see Fort Johnson.
- Johnson, R. W., Brig.-Gen., U. S. A., in command of 2d division, 20th Corps, his position on extreme of right wing at Stone's River, 218; his flank turned, *ib.*; sent to left wing, Sept. 19, battle of Chickamauga, 222; his position in line of battle, *ib.*; estimate of his strength, Sept. 20, 225.
- Johnston, A. S., General, C. S. A., Col. 2d U. S. Cavalry, 1855, 170; in command of Utah expedition, 1857, 171; resigned his U. S. army commission, 173; joined the Confederate army, *ib.*; Thomas promoted to fill his place, *ib.*; his inadequate preparations in Kentucky and Tennessee, 249; the Western Confederate forces united under his command, March, 1862, 250; the effect of Union victory at Logan's Cross Roads on, 177; his evacuation of Kentucky and Tennessee, 271; his strong position at Corinth, 232; the initiative taken by, against Grant, *ib.*; joined by Beauregard, 7; their scheme to attack Grant at Pittsburg Landing, 7-8, 26; presumably knew Grant's intention to seize Corinth, 232; and that Buell was coming to join Grant, *ib.*; his purpose to beat Grant before Buell's arrival, 8, 26, 129, 232; delayed too long, 232; his strength, 231; battle of Pittsburg Landing, or Shiloh, 4, 8; Grant attacked by, April 6, 1862, 4, 26, 130, 231, 250; the attack a surprise, 4, 26, 130, 132, 250; the charge of surprise refuted, 231-233; defeated Grant April 6, 26, 44, 231; killed, 26; his army totally defeated, April 7, 26-27, 130, 231; would not have retreated, April 7, 26; his strength, 231; a truly great soldier, 25, 26.
- Johnston, J. E., General, C. S. A., Lieut.-Col. 1st U. S. Cavalry, 1855, 170; joined the Confederate army, 171; in command Shenandoah Valley, June 13-July 18, 1861, 5; plan for union of his army with Beauregard's, 5, 6; ordered to Manassas, July 17, 7; battle of Bull Run, July 21, 1861, 4; saved the day, 26; did not contemplate pursuit after

- Bull Run, 7; urged increase of army, *ib.*; advised invasion of Maryland, *ib.*; the battle at Seven Pines not fought according to orders of, 256; defeated by Grant at Jackson, May 14, 1863, 234; his strength, July 25, 32, 234; conjecture as to his success if he had been in command at Vicksburg, 256; Bragg believed by Rosecrans Sept. 11, to have been re-enforced by, 220; superseding Bragg he assumed command of the Army of the Tennessee, Dec. 27, 1863, 266; the army depleted when he took command, *ib.*; Sherman's opponent, 1864, 135; his strength, 1864, 135; his position at Dalton, Ga., 135, 187; Sherman's error in not striking the rear of his army at Resaca, 135; the battle of Resaca, May 14-15, 1864, *ib.*, 188; his evasion of Sherman, thereafter, 136; repulsed by Thomas at Little Kenesaw, 206; not re-enforced by Polk's corps prior to May 10, 1864, 188; his army to be Sherman's objective under orders of April 4, 1864, 133-134; his army should have been destroyed by Thomas' scheme, properly executed, 188; his army not destroyed, 134; superseded by Hood, June 18, 1864, 136; two of his brigades at Cold Harbor, 14; his division before Bermuda Hundred June, 1864, *ib.*; brought to Petersburg, 15; operations in the Carolinas, 1865, 17; Beauregard and Hood superseded by, March, 1865, 19; distrusted by Sherman, *ib.*; his ineffective engagements at Bentonville and Averysboro', *ib.*; interview with Davis at Greensboro', *ib.*; negotiations, April 13, 1865, opened with Sherman, 146, 150; surrender at Greensboro', 4, 20, 150, 151; Beauregard distrusted by, 6; Stuart at Bull Run, commended by, 157; next to Lee, the best Confederate commander, 135; his sagacious advice not heeded by the Confederate Govt., 248, 256; his weak army, 1861, 249; his treatment by his Govt., 254; his death, 1891, 256, note 1; 207.
- Jonesborough, Ga., battle of Sept. 1, 1864, 189; Thomas engaged in, 190; his faculty in emergencies instanced at, 206.
- Kansas, Hancock's service during border troubles in, 51.
- Kautz, A. V., Brig.-Gen., U. S. V., at Deep Bottom Bridge, July 28, 1864, 64.
- Kellogg, S. C., Capt., U. S. V., an aide on Thomas' staff, at battle of Chickamauga, 243; bearer of message from Thomas to Rosecrans which led to disaster at Chickamauga, 229; responsible for legend on War Dept. map, 230, 243.
- Kelly's Ford, Va., action at, 157, 159.
- Kelly, P., Col., 88th N. Y., U. S. V., in 2d brigade, 1st division, 2d Corps, 59.
- Kemper, J. L., Brig.-Gen., C. S. A., in attack July 3, 1863, on Cemetery Ridge, 49.
- Kenesaw Mountain, Ga., battle of June 10-July 2, 1864, not to Sherman's credit, 135; Thomas in battle of, 190, 206. See Little Kenesaw.
- Kentucky, loyal to the Union, 173; under Anderson's command, 1861, 128; evacuated by Confederates, 1862, 7, 129; evacuation caused by their loss of Fort Donelson, 271; Thomas frustrated rebel conspiracy to seize state arms, 175; inadequate provision made by Confederates for defence in, 249; under Union control in 1862, *ib.*, 250; Union line in, Nov., 1862, extended from London to Columbia, 213; Confederate advance to Mill Springs, 213; encouragement to loyalty given by victory at Logan's Cross Roads, 215; operations under Grant's command July-Oct., 1862, 233; the control of the U. S. in, imperilled by Sherman, 1864, 144.
- Kershaw, J. B., Maj.-Gen., C. S. A., at battle of Chickamauga, 182; his division at Petersburg June 18, 1864, 17.
- Khartoum, in the Soudan, 115.
- Kingston, Ga., Sherman's letter to Thomas, Nov. 10, 1864, from, 241.
- Knoxville, Tenn., Confederates unsuccessful at, 182.
- Kolb's Farm, Ga., Thomas in engagement at, 190.
- Lafayette, Ga., Bragg retreated to, Sept., 1863, from Chattanooga, 220.
- La Grange, O. H., Col. 1st Wisconsin cavalry, commander of 2d brigade, 1st division, cavalry corps, with Thomas, 1864, 194.
- Laiboldt, B., Col. U. S. V., in command of 2d brigade, 3d division, 20th Corps,



his position in right wing, battle of Chickamauga, Sept. 20, 227.

Lebanon, Ky., distance from Logan's Cross Roads, 215; Thomas 17 days marching from, *ib.*

Lee, Fitzhugh, Maj.-Gen., C. S. A., his attack on Sheridan at Dinwiddie C. H., March 31, 90.

Lee, G. W. C., Maj.-Gen., C. S. A., a cadet at West Point, 1850-1854, under Thomas' instruction, 169.

Lee, R. E., General, C. S. A., a cadet at West Point, 1825-1829, 76; Lieut.-Col., 2d U. S. Cavalry, 1855, 170; his devotion to Virginia, though deprecating secession, 166, 171; entered the service of Virginia, April 20, 1861, before his resignation from U. S. army had been accepted, 172-173; his place filled by promotion of Thomas, 173; his defensive policy, 1861, 5; recommended union of armies under Beauregard and Johnston, 5; advised capture of Arlington and Alexandria, 5; Beauregard's scheme against Washington, not approved by, 5, 6; overwhelmed 5th Corps at Gaines' Mill, 124; with co-operation of Jackson forced McClellan to the James, 250; Malvern Hill not fought as he intended, 256-257; his invasion of Maryland and Pennsylvania, 1862, 117, 118, 119, 120; McClellan's delayed attack on, at Antietam, 124; battle of Antietam, 117, 118, 119, 120; battle of South Mountain, 118, 119; not utterly defeated by McClellan, 120; torpid pursuit of, after Antietam, 82, 120; gave Stuart command of Jackson's corps at Chancellorsville, 159; his Gettysburg campaign, 59, 160; Stuart of no service to him, 160-161; his ignorance of whereabouts of Union army, 160, 161; his sole chance in battle of Gettysburg, 162; failure of his plans at, *ib.*; battle not fought as intended by, 256-257; pursuit of, 86; unable to make up for losses at Gettysburg, 265; believed by Grant 1863, never to have been ably fought, 34; his army made Meade's objective by orders of April 9, 1864, 134; in Beauregard's plan of May 18, 12, 13; his army May 3, 1864, weaker than on July 1, 1863, 265; his strength at the beginning of 1864 campaign, 40; battle of the Wilderness, 35; he should have been

made to give battle beyond the Wilderness, 87; Grant by chance out-generated by, at Spottsylvania, 36; his position, May, 1864, at Spottsylvania, 12; his veterans beaten at the Salient, May 12, 1864, 62-63; his stalemate to Grant on the North Anna, 39; Grant blocked at Cold Harbor, *ib.*; battle of Cold Harbor, 13, 14; would not leave his entrenchments, 40; ignorant of Grant's movement to the James, 13, 14, 16, 17, 42, 43; sent troops to Petersburg, 15, 17; his army supposed to be there, 16; himself at Petersburg, 17; feint to draw his army from Petersburg July, 1864, 63, 64; the position of his army at close of 1864, 134; the Confederacy had but his army and Hood's east of the Mississippi, 141; Grant became his antagonist, 1865, 89; his Shenandoah Army destroyed by Sheridan, 134; Grant's plan to cut his communications, 43; execution of plan delayed, 90; his supply-line to Hicksford cut, *ib.*; his attempt on City Point, Union base of supplies, *ib.*; foiled, *ib.*; his position at Petersburg not altered by Sherman's operations, 149; withdrew from Petersburg April 2, 91; his only roads of escape, *ib.*; pursuit of by Humphreys and Sheridan April 6-7, 91-94; a day lost by him at Amelia C. H., April 4, 91; his road barred at Burkesville, April 4, *ib.*; his attempt to evade, 91-92; his hope to reach Farmville or Rice's Station, 92; his army divided, April 6, *ib.*; he might have been captured April 7, 93; Humphreys prevented him from reaching Lynchburg, 93; compelled by Humphreys to lose time, April 8, 94; abandoned his position with his starving army, *ib.*; his line of retreat from Appomattox held by Sheridan, 257; Grant's demand of surrender, 94; his reply, *ib.*; his surrender, 19, 67, 94; conquered by starvation, 44; the proposition that his army was more formidable than Western armies discussed, 182; resistance offered by Hood to Thomas as great as that to Grant by, 194; conditions of capture for Hood after Nashville unlike those for capture of, 192; would have been a difficult opponent at Vicksburg, 32; his advantage of interior lines, 41; his superiority, compared with Grant, *ib.*,

- 44; his campaigns models for study, 44; Badeau's poor opinion of, 35, 36, 42; his distrust of Beauregard, 6; Humphreys' abilities in supreme command like Lee's, questioned, 95; Longstreet's corps the flower of army of, 182; his mistaken use of cavalry, 260-261; the gravity Stuart's loss would have been to, 261; freedom given to Stuart in Gettysburg campaign by, *ib.*; his purpose in these raids not explained, *ib.*
- Lewis, J. H., Brig.-Gen., C. S. A., of Breckinridge's division at Missionary Ridge, 238 note 3.
- Lexington, Ky., projected encampment of rebels at, 1861, 175.
- Liddell, St. J. R., Brig.-Gen., C. S. A., strength of his division, Walker's corps, Sept. 18, 1863, and losses at Chickamauga, Sept. 19-20, 225.
- Lincoln, the President, his orders for defence of Washington warranted, 107, 109; disregarded by McClellan, 107, 108, 109; his relations with McClellan, 123, 124; McClellan's delay in announcing his disposition of army to, 108; McClellan's contention as to deprivation of McDowell's co-operation, 107-113; McClellan's wrong construction of the promises of, 110; his advice to McClellan of April 10, 111; McClellan's letter of May 21, to, *ib.*; permission granted to McClellan to write on "present state of military affairs," 114; McClellan's letter of advice to, July 7, 111; its presumption, 114-115; advised by McClellan on slavery question, 114-115; McClellan's contempt for the cabinet of, 99, 106; McClellan's contempt for, 111; Burnside's recommendation of Humphreys for promotion to, 82; Savannah presented as a Christmas gift to, 144; his admiration of Sherman's Georgia campaign, 151; his call for 300,000 men, 1862, 250-251; his administration discussed, 251-256; not brilliant, 251; unnecessarily extravagant, *ib.*; he was not an experienced ruler, *ib.*; the most wise and sagacious statesman known in the U. S., *ib.*; incompetent for direction of military affairs, 252; his management of military affairs and Davis', compared, 252-254; his poor early appointments to the army, 252; his judgment improved, 253; his support of Grant and Sherman, 254; submitted to political influence, 254-255; illustrated by support of Butler, *ib.*; Life of, by Hay and Nicolay cited, 80.
- Little Kenesaw, Ga., Thomas' assault at, June 18, 1864, 206.
- Livermore, T. L., Col., U. S. V., on Hancock's staff, 57; letters of Davis and Rosecrans to, concerning the incorrect legend on War Dept. map, 243-244.
- Logan, J. A., Maj.-Gen., U. S. V., in the affair before Atlanta, July 22, 1864, 189; at Army Reunion, Chicago, 1868, 198.
- Logan Cross Roads, near Mill Spring, Ky., battle of Jan. 19, 1862, Confederates in position before Mill Springs, Dec. 2, 1861, 213; Thomas ordered to, Dec. 29, *ib.*; arrived at Logan's Cross Roads, Jan. 17, 1862, from Somerset, 214; Confederates re-enforced Jan. 18, *ib.*; Thomas attacked by Crittenden, June 19, 176, 214; his advance fell back, *ib.*; no evidence in Record to indicate a repulse, 214; Confederates routed by a charge at 10 A. M., 176; the flank charge made by McCook, 214; Zollicoffer killed, 176, 214; a relentless pursuit to Camberland River, 176; captures, 177; the Confederate force never reorganized, *ib.*; the termination of Crittenden's military career, *ib.*; the Confederate strength, 214; the Union strength, 176, 214; the losses on each side, 177, 214; the effect on A. S. Johnston, 177; an encouragement of loyalty in Kentucky, 215; the effect at Washington, *ib.*, 215; the first Union victory since Bull Run, 177; Thomas' first Western victory, 191, 204, 205; his characteristic traits displayed at, 191, 204, 205; his services slighted by Govt., 177; thanked by Ohio, 206; no evidence in Record that Thomas changed from defensive to offensive, 214; his policy of delaying engagement from Jan. 17 to Jan. 19, questioned, 215; the slowness of his march questioned, *ib.*; his colonels promoted, 177, 215; his own promotion to rank of Major-General dependent on reputation made at, 215, 230; called also Battle of Mill Springs, 191, 204, 205, 206, 211.
- London, Ky., Union line extended, Nov., 1862, to Columbia from, 213.

- Longstreet, J., Lieut.-Gen., C. S. A., at Molino del Rey, 51; in command of Bragg's left wing at Chickamauga, Sept. 20, 223; his orders to attack, *ib.*; his assault on Thomas, about 2 P. M., 228, 229; his strength, 228; defeated by Thomas at Chickamauga, Sept. 20, 1863, 181, 182; his loss, 182; his corps the flower of Lee's army, *ib.*; recalled to Virginia after battle of Missionary Ridge, 206; in Wilderness, battle of May 6, 1864, 62; his attempt to escape abandoned, 1865, 92; did not surpass Humphreys, 95; his brilliant reputation as a fighter, 131.
- Lookout Mountain, Tenn., Thomas' position on, after Chickamauga, 234; carried by Hooker, Nov. 24, 33, 235; his movement to Mission Ridge from, Nov. 25, 236; Sherman, opposed by forces from, 186.
- Los Angeles, California, Hancock stationed at prior to 1861, 55, 66.
- Louisiana, Thomas stationed in, 1868, 168; Banks in, spring of 1863, 233.
- Louisville, Ky., Thomas on duty at, Sept. 6, 1861, 175; exposed by Sherman to capture by Hood, 144.
- Lynchburg, Va., Miles and De Trobriand sent in pursuit of Lee, towards, 93; the Confederates entrenched on road to, April 7, *ib.*; Lee prevented by Humphreys from reaching, *ib.*, 94.
- Lyon, N., Brig.-Gen., U. S. V., rebel Camp Jackson broken up by, May, 1861, 175.
- Macanlay, T. B., cited, 54, 199.
- McCall, G. A., appointed Brig.-Gen., U. S. V., May 17, 1861, 174.
- McClellan, Carswell, Col., U. S. V., Humphreys' claim as to selection of Union position on Malvern Hill proved by, 80; his account of Humphreys' charge at Fredericksburg, 83.
- McClellan, G. B., Maj.-Gen., U. S. A., his "Own Story" reviewed, 99-124; the origin of the book, 99; his egotism displayed in, *ib.*; its merits of style, *ib.*, 100; entirely subjective, *ib.*; the errors of his Report perpetuated in it, 101; the opposition to his Peninsular plan, *ib.*; his disregard of orders for the defence of Washington, 107, 108; his assumption as to the forces at his disposition, 108, 110; his announcement, April 1, 1862, of his disposition of the army, 108; ignorant of the topography of Yorktown, 102; his contention with respect to the co-operation of the navy at Yorktown, 101-106; Barnard's report concerning the navy, March 20, 1862, 102-103; his unwarranted dependence on the navy, 101-106, 110; his erroneous estimates of the Confederate strength, 101; value of James River as a route to Richmond, 39; his neglect of that route discussed, 116-117; his army in Chickahominy swamps, 116-117; Humphreys with, in Peninsular campaign, 79; his contention, as to deprivation of McDowell's co-operation, 107-113, 116-117; his complaints, 111; McDowell was not expected to participate in operations before Richmond, 116; his resentment of McDowell's independent command, 113; forced to the James by Lee and Jackson, 250; no mention of Humphreys' service at Malvern Hill in his report, 79; opposed by a weak army under Johnston, 249; his assumption that after Pope's failure he only could have commanded the army, 100, 116; the battle of Antietam discussed, 117-118; 120; his delay in attack, 117, 124; the battle not fought as intended by, 257; his uncorrected misstatement of Humphreys at Antietam, 80-81; his battle of South Mountain glorified, 118-119; his position Sept.-Oct., 1862, 120; his delays, 120, 121; stopped to refit and reorganize, *ib.*; futility of Stuart's raid round his army, 258; his relations with the Government, 123-124; the Government not responsible for his failures, 124; his contempt for the Government, 99, 111, 112; his inability to adapt himself to the civil authorities, 109-110, 120, 121; disregarded orders, 120, 121; removed from command, *ib.*; reasons for removal, *ib.*; superseded by Burnside, *ib.*; his self-confidence expressed in letter to Lincoln, May 21, 111; his offer to advise Lincoln, June 20, 114; his letter of advice to Lincoln of July 7, 111; its presumption, 114-115; his letter to Stanton, June 28, 112; his genius for organization, 122; affection of the army for, *ib.*, 123; his power of exciting enthu-

- siasm in the army, 122; his weariness of command, 112; his debt to his country paid, *ib.*, 113; a man of emotional nature, and of religious feelings, 100; divinely appointed to save the Union, 99, 100, 112, 118, 119; twice saved the Union, 118, 119; his inconsistency of statement, 116; his unhealthy mind, 120; his wilfulness, 115, 120; his letters to his wife cited, 100, 111, 112, 118, 119, 120; his epithet for Hancock, 56.
- McClellan, H. B., Maj., C. S. A., his Life and Campaigns of Stuart reviewed, 155-162; Chief-of-Staff to Stuart, 156; his conclusions as to battles, not final, 157; his defence of Stuart's movement in Gettysburg campaign, 161; his account of Stuart's death, 162.
- McClelland, J. A., Brig.-Gen., U. S. A., appointed Brig.-Gen., U. S. V., May 17, 1861, 174; his march in Western Kentucky, 215; project to give him command of Mississippi expedition, 28; Grant's purpose to keep control, 28, 29, 30.
- McCook, A. M. D., Maj.-Gen., U. S. V., a cadet at West Point, 1847-1852, under Thomas' instruction, 169; in command of 14th Army Corps, Dec. 14, 1862, Jan. 12, 1863, in command of three divisions and right wing, battle of Stone's River, 218; attacked, *ib.*; not saved by Thomas, 219; in command of 20th Corps, Jan.-Oct., 1863; sent in pursuit of Bragg over Cumberland Mountains, 220; his position at Stevens' and Cooper's Gaps, Lookout Mountain, *ib.*; his position Sept. 19, at Chickamauga, 222; a division of his corps sent to left wing, Sept. 19, battle of Chickamauga, *ib.*; Granger ordered to support, 223; his position, Sept. 20, *ib.*; ordered to re-enforce Thomas, 224; Thomas directed to employ him on his right, *ib.*; his strength, 225; re-enforcements sent to Thomas not required, 226; the propriety of Thomas' call for aid from, Sept. 20, questioned, *ib.*; his attempt to close the gap made by withdrawal of Wood's division, 227.
- McCook, D., Col., U. S. V., in command of 2d brigade, 2d division, Granger's Reserve Corps, estimate of his strength, Sept. 20, Chickamauga, 228.
- McCook, E. M., Brig.-Gen., in command of 1st division, Cavalry Corps, with Thomas, 1864, 194.
- McCook, R. L., Col., 9th Ohio Infantry, in command of 3d brigade, 1st division, Army of the Ohio, his charge at Logan's Cross Roads put Confederates to flight, 214.
- McCoy's Ferry on Potomac, Stuart crossed river at, Oct., 1862, 158.
- McDonald's House, Chickamauga Valley, Thomas' position near road to, Sept. 20, 222; Confederates penetrated to road leading to, 224.
- McDowell, I., Maj.-Gen., U. S. V., his position June-July, 1861, 5; Beauregard's plan to exterminate, July, 6; in Sept., 7; began march to Bull Run, July 16, 7; his plan of attack not executed, *ib.*; McClellan's contention as to the deprivation of his co-operation, 107-113; retained for defence of Washington, 107, 110; his independent command resented by McClellan, 113; his expedition to the Shenandoah Valley, 116-117; to his withdrawal McClellan attributed the failure of his campaign, *ib.*; McClellan did not expect him to participate in operations before Richmond, 116.
- McKeen, H. B., Col., U. S. V., 59.
- McLaws, L., Maj.-Gen., C. S. A., Col. Dawes' estimate of his strength at Chickamauga, Aug. 31, 1863, cited, 228 note.
- McPherson, J. B., Maj.-Gen., U. S. A., a cadet at West Point, 1847-1852, under Thomas' instruction, 169; as Lieut.-Col. U. S. A., Chief Engineer on Grant's staff, at battle of Shiloh, statement that the advance of enemy was known, April 6, 1862, 232; under Sherman's command, 1864, 135; his strength at beginning of 1864 Atlanta campaign, 188; his losses, 189; his movement through Snake Creek Gap, May 7-13; attacked by Hood's forces, July 22, 190; killed in battle of July 22, before Atlanta, 189; a hero of the Army of the Tennessee, 129; Humphreys not surpassed by, 95.
- Madison, J., President, 165.
- Malvern Hill, Va., position of Union army selected by Humphreys, 79-80; the battle not fought as intended by Lee, 257.
- Manassas Gap, Va., action at, July 23, 1863, 87.

- Manassas Junction, Beauregard in command at, 1861, 5; Johnston ordered to, July 17, 7; battle of 1862, 100, 119.
- Maney, F., Maj. C. S. A., of Walker's division at Missionary Ridge, 238 notes 3, 5.
- March to the Sea, Sherman's successful work, 141-144; its utility discussed, 151; the plan suggested by Thomas, 191.
- Marietta, Ga., Thomas in engagement of, July 3-4, 1864, 190.
- Marshall, H., Brig.-Gen., C. S. A., a graduate of West Point, 75.
- Marshall, J., Chief Justice, a Virginian, 165.
- Marye's Heights, Fredericksburg, Hancock's movement against, Dec. 13, 1862, 59; Humphreys' assault, 82.
- Maryland, Beauregard's plan to rouse, 6; invasion of, urged, 1861, 7; invaded by Lee, 1862, 118, 119; Stuart's Oct., 1862, raid in, 158; McClellan's belief that the State was saved by him, 100, 119.
- Mason, J. Y., Member of Congress, Thomas' interview with, 1836, 167; cadets from his district unsuccessful at West Point, *ib.*
- Meade, G. G., Maj.-Gen., U. S. A., a cadet at West Point, 1831-1835, 76; given command of Army of Potomac, June 28, 1863, 86; his indifference to Stuart's raid, June-July, 1863, 161, 261; his letter to Halleck declining to capture Stuart, 261-262; responsibilities at Gettysburg entrusted to Hancock by, 60; Lee ignorant of movements of, 161; his victory at Gettysburg possibly dependent on Stuart's absence from Lee, 162; Humphreys his Chief-of-Staff, July 8, 1863-Nov. 25, 1864, 86; Grant with in Virginia, 1864, 133; orders for campaign of April 9, 134; his difficulties in command, under Grant, 87-89; relations between Grant and, obscure, 88; his order to attack Petersburg June 18, not fully carried out, 17; ignorant that Grant intended to take Petersburg, 43, 88; his relations with Humphreys, 88, 89; made Humphreys commander of 2d Corps, *ib.*; appointed Webb Chief-of-Staff, *ib.*; his irascibility, *ib.*; Humphreys' suggestions to, April 7, 1865, 93; his generalship at Gettysburg, 86; his excellent employment of cavalry in advance to Gettysburg, 258; Grant's use of cavalry, 1864, not approved by, 259; a master of logistics, 53; blamed by Badeau, 35, 37; compared with Humphreys, 95.
- Meagher, T. F., Brig.-Gen., U. S. A., at Fredericksburg, 1862, 59.
- Memphis, Tenn., 129.
- Memphis and Charleston Railway, best route to Vicksburg, 28, 29.
- Merrimac, Confederate ram "Virginia," her service, 1862, 102; her neutralization promised, 102-103; engagement with Monitor, March 9, 1862, 104-105; mentioned, 109, 110; destroyed by the Confederates, May 11, 1862, 115.
- Mexico, war of U. S. and, Hancock's service in, 51; Sherman served in California during, 128; Thomas' service in, 168-169.
- Mexico, Gulf of, see Gulf of Mexico.
- Micanopy, Florida, battle Seminole War, Humphreys engaged in, 76.
- Middleburg, Va., actions at, June 17-19, 1863, 157, 159.
- Miles, N. A., Maj.-Gen., U. S. A., 59; in engagement on White Oak Road, March 31, 91; at Sutherland's Station, April 2, *ib.*; in pursuit of Lee, April 6-7, 92.
- Military Division of the Mississippi, comprising the Department of the Ohio, of the Cumberland and of the Tennessee, command of, given to Grant, Oct. 16, 1863, 183, 230; command of given to Sherman, March 12, 1864, 133, 187, 238.
- Milledgeville, Ga., public buildings spared by Sherman, 147.
- Mill Springs, Ky., battle of, Jan. 19, 1862, 191, 204, 205, 206, 211, 230. See Logan's Cross Roads.
- Mine Run, Va., abortive movement to, Nov. 26-Dec. 4, 1863, 87.
- Minnesota, U. S. S., 102.
- Minty, R. H. G., Col. 4th Mich. Cavalry, in command of 2d brigade, 2d division, Cavalry Corps, with Thomas, 1864, 194.
- Missionary Ridge, Chattanooga, Tenn., battle of Nov. 23-25, 1863, 32-34, 132-133, 184-187, 234-238; Bragg's position on, 33, 234; the character of defences, 186; a small force sufficient to hold the Ridge, 186; Thomas' position on, Sept. 19, 222; Sherman's position on, Nov. 24, 235; Grant's plan of attack on, issued Nov. 18, 1863, 184; 234; orders to

- Sherman, 235; orders to Thomas, 184, 234, 235; report that Bragg was retreating from, 184; Thomas carried Orchard Knob, Nov. 23, *ib.*, 235; Thomas instructed to capture rifle-pits and Ridge, Nov. 25, 236; his troops exceeded orders and captured the Ridge, 23, 132, 133, 184, 185, 186, 187, 236; the Union charge a miracle of military history, 186; Grant's purposes as to assault discussed, *ib.*, 237; the time of duration of battle, 185; the Union strength, *ib.*; Sherman's strength, 237; Thomas' strength, *ib.*; the Confederate strength, 185, 238; the losses on both sides, 185-186; the losses of the Union army not large at, 267; guns captured at, by Thomas, 203; Bragg's army depleted at, and after, 266; the Union army at Atlanta the same as at, *ib.*
- Mississippi, Military Division or Department of, see Military Division of the Mississippi.
- Mississippi, operations in, under Grant's command, July-Oct., 1862, 233.
- Mississippi Central Railway, a route to Vicksburg, 28.
- Mississippi River, Humphreys' survey, 1850-1851, and report, 77; a fleet of gunboats created by the U. S. to operate in, 271; Sherman's estimate of force necessary to open, 1861, 247; open, April 1, 1862, to Island No. 10, 7; Grant's purpose to open, 27; opened to Vicksburg, 1862, 249; Grant's failure to take Vicksburg from east side of, 233; projected appointment of McClelland to command on, 28; Davis' project to continue the war beyond, 1865, 20.
- Mississippi Valley, history of the war in, the history of the Army of the Cumberland, and of the Tennessee, 129.
- Mississippi U. S. Volunteers, under Hatch, 1864, 194.
- Missouri, A. J. Smith's corps transferred to Nashville from, 142; two divisions from, added to Thomas' army, Nov., 1864, 240.
- Mitchell, W. G., Bvt. Brig.-Gen., U. S. V., on Hancock's staff, 57.
- Mitchell's Ford, Bull Run, in McDowell's plan, 1861, 7.
- Mobile, Ala., 129; movement to proposed by Sherman, Sept., 1864, 137.
- Mobile and Ohio Railway, a route to Vicksburg, 28.
- Molino del Rey, Hancock, Armistead, Longstreet, and Pickett, in battle of, 51.
- Monitor, U. S. gunboat, engagement with the Merrimac, March 9, 1862, 105.
- Monocacy, Md., 80.
- Monroe, Fort. see Fort Monroe.
- Monroe, J., President, 165, 166.
- Monterey, battle of, Thomas' good service at, 168.
- Morell, G. W., Brig.-Gen., U. S. V., cadet at West Point, 1831-1835, commissioned Brig.-Gen., U. S. V., Aug. 9, 1861, in advance of Thomas, 213.
- Morgan, C. H., Bvt. Brig.-Gen., U. S. V., in veteran corps organized by Hancock, 1864-1865, 66.
- Morgan, E. D., Governor of New York, concurred in recommending a call for 300,000 men, 1862, 251.
- Morris Island, Charleston harbor, Hunter's plans against, faulty, 1863, 9.
- Morton, O. P., Governor of Indiana, concurred in recommending call for 300,000 men, 1862, 251.
- Mott, G., Bvt. Maj.-Gen., U. S. V., called to Petersburg July 28, 1864, 64.
- Murfreesborough, Tenn., Confederates concentrated at, Dec., 1862, 179; the battle of Stone's River, Dec. 31, 1862-Jan. 3, 1863, 179-181, 217-220; the advance from, towards Chattanooga, begun June 24, 1862, 181; Steedman in expedition to intercept Hood detained at, Dec. 20-22, 1864, 193.
- Napier, Sir W. F. P., his account of Wellington cited, 204-205.
- Napoleon I., his cavalry system like Hannibal's, 156; the effect of the use of railroads in his Russian campaign conjectured, 272; Grant in comparison with, 36, 41, 46; Thomas did not show the audacity of, 204; 269.
- Napoleon III., his sympathies not with the North, 268-269; his prediction of failure, *ib.*
- Nashville, Tenn., a Union movement on, apprehended by A. S. Johnston, Jan., 1862, 177; the fall of, Feb. 23, 1862, caused by the capture of Fort Donelson, 129; Army of the Cumberland's advance to, 178; Buell's forces at, ordered to Pittsburg Landing, 129; his march begun,

- March 18, 232; returning from Perryville, arrived at, Nov. 1862, 179; a base of supplies for Sherman, 1864, 136; railroads running south from, threatened, Sept., 1864, 138; distance of Florence, Ala., from, 240; defence of, assigned to Thomas, 134; exposed by withdrawal of Sherman, to capture by Hood, 144; Thomas chose to have Schofield at Franklin rather than at, 241; Hood's pursuit of Thomas to, 143; besieged by Hood, *ib.*; the battle of, 191-195; fought according to plan, 257; the plan solely Thomas', 191, 204; his strength at, Nov. 30, 1864, 142; enemy strongly fortified before, 192; Thomas' change from defensive to offensive, *ib.*; the cavalry employed in assault of fortified lines at, 194; Hood annihilated, 143-144; 192, 268; Thomas' captures, 192, 203; compared with other victories, 192; conditions unfavorable for capture of Hood, 192-193; the pursuit after, 193; Thomas thanked by Congress after, 206; honored by Tennessee, *ib.*; promoted to rank of Major-General U. S. A. for this victory, *ib.*; his fame dependent on, 207; included by Swinton among the twelve decisive battles, *ib.*; a defeat would have ruined the national cause, *ib.*; the result caused the Confederacy to totter, 208; disposition to consider the victory an ordinary affair, 152.
- Navy Department of the U. S., McClellan's contention, with, 101, 106; only promised to neutralize the Merrimac, 102-106.
- Negley, J. S., Brig.-Gen., U. S. V., in command of 2d division, at Stone's River, forced back Dec. 31, 218, 219; in battle of Chickamanga, 222-225; his division asked for at 6 A. M. Sept. 20, by Thomas, 222; sent at 6.30 A. M., 223, 244; one of his brigades reached Thomas before battle, the others detained, *ib.*; called for again by Thomas at 11 A. M., 224; his strength, 225.
- Neill, T. H., Brig.-Gen., U. S. V., in command of 2d division, 6th Corps, before Petersburg, June 16, 1864, 15.
- Nelson, W., Brig.-Gen., U. S. V., in command of 4th division Army of the Ohio, Grant re-enforced at battle of Shiloh, by, 231; his strength April 7, 1862, *ib.*
- Neuse River, N. C., troops called from, to Richmond, May, 1864, 11.
- Newbern, N. C., Confederate plan against, 1864, 10.
- New Hope Church, Ga., battle of May 25-June 5, 1864, Thomas engaged in, 190.
- New Jersey, Washington unconquered in, rendered the possession of New York of little value to the British, 134.
- New Orleans, La., Confederate defences insufficient at, 249; under Union control, 1862, *ib.*
- New Store, Va., but for Humphreys, Lee might have reached, April 7, 93.
- New York City, its possession of little value to the British, 134; Thomas at, winter of 1860-1861, 172; the advocacy of secession at his hotel, *ib.*; ordered to Carlisle Barracks, from, April, 1861, *ib.*
- Nicolay, J. G., see Hay, J.
- Ninth Corps, U. S. A., reorganized, 1864, 10; before Petersburg, June 16, 1864, 15, in July, 63.
- North Anna River, Va., Grant stalemated by Lee on, 39; 87.
- North Carolina, command of coast, 1864, striven for by Confederates, 10-11; Confederate forces called from, 11; Sherman's march through, 145; his position in, compared to that of Cornwallis, 145.
- Northern States of the U. S. See United States, Northern States.
- Norton, W. A., Professor, a cadet at West Point, 1827-1831, 75.
- Nugent, R., Bvt. Brig.-Gen., U. S. V., a Col. in 1st division, 2d Corps, 1861-1862, 59.
- Numbers or strength of forces, questions involved in treating, 212.
- Octoroon, U. S. gunboat, 103.
- Official Records, the fountain-head of military history of the U. S., 1861-1865, 212; appealed to, for rectification of history, 190; examined with respect to the claims made for Thomas to the disparagement of Grant and Sherman, 212 *et seq.*; its evidence that the Union Army was not surprised at Shiloh, 231-233; 239.
- Oglesby, R. J., Maj.-Gen., U. S. V., at Army Reunion, Chicago, 1868, 198.
- Ohio, Sherman appointed to West

- Point from, 1836, 128; Thomas thanked by, after Mill Spring, 206; organizations formed in, to secure nomination to Presidency for Thomas, 201.
- Ohio Volunteers, 9th regt. (German) its charge at Logan's Cross Roads, 176.
- Ohio River, 129.
- Ohio, Army of, see Army of the Ohio.
- Old Point Comfort, appearance of the Merrimac off, 104.
- Oloklikaha, battle, Seminole War, March 31, 1836, Humphreys at, 76.
- Orange and Fredericksburg Plank Road, action of May 5, 1864, on, 62.
- Orchard Knob, Missionary Ridge, captured by Thomas, Nov. 23, 1865, 184, 235; Union position on Nov. 25, 236; Thomas' faculty of meeting emergencies instanced at, 206.
- Ord, E. O. C., Maj.-Gen., U. S. V., across Lee's path, April 7, 94; at Farmville, April 7, *ib.*; his services in ending the war, 67.
- Osterhaus, P. J., Brig.-Gen., U. S. V., in command of 1st division, 15th Corps, with Thomas at Missionary Ridge, 297.
- Pacific Railway, Humphreys' survey, and report on a route for, 77-78.
- Palmer, J. M., Brig.-Gen., U. S. V., in command of 2d division, 14th Corps, at Stone's River, 219; transferred to left wing Sept. 18, battle of Chickamauga, 222; his position in line of battle, *ib.*; his strength Sept. 20, 225.
- Palmerston, his sympathies not with the North, 268-269; his experience in affairs of state, 269; predicted failure to the North, *ib.*
- Pamunkey River, Va., one of McClellan's routes of communication, 116.
- Paris, France, the Prussian army supplied by railroad during siege of, 272.
- Park, Roswell, Professor, a cadet at West Point, 1827-1831, 75.
- Parke, J. G., Bvt. Maj.-Gen., U. S. A., his repulse of Gordon, March, 1865, at Fort Stedman, 90; his services in ending the war, 67.
- Parker, I. B., Capt., U. S. V., on Hancock's staff, 57.
- Patterson, R., Maj.-Gen., U. S. V., given command of Department of Pennsylvania, April 27, 1861, 173; his position in Va., 5; Thomas assigned to command of a brigade under him, 173; his advance into Virginia, *ib.*; engagement at Falling Waters, *ib.*; Beauregard's plan to destroy him, 6; made the scapegoat of Bull Run disaster, 174; supported by Thomas in the ensuing controversy, *ib.*; 213.
- Peach Tree Creek, Ga., Thomas in engagement of, July 20, 1864, 190; Hood repulsed at, *ib.*; Union loss, *ib.*; slight allusion to, in Sherman's report, *ib.*; Thomas' faculty in emergencies instanced at, 206; the Union army the same at Atlanta as at, 267.
- Peeble's Farm, Va., battle of Sept. 30, 1864, mentioned, 87.
- Pemberton, J. C., Lieut.-Gen., C. S. A., in command at Vicksburg, supposed by Sherman to be held by Grant, Dec., 1862, 29; Grant's plan to turn left wing of, at Vicksburg, 31; his strength, 32; surrendered to Grant, July 4, 1863, 234; number of men surrendered, *ib.*; fighting him not to be compared to fighting Lee, 34.
- Peninsular Campaign, 1862, governmental opposition to plan, 101; cause of its failure, 116-117; Humphreys' services during, 79.
- Pennsylvania, believed by McClellan to have been saved by him, 100, 118, 119; Stuart's futile raid in, Oct., 1862, 158, 261; invaded by Lee, 1863, 59; Stuart's raid in, 1863, 261; the Confederates suffered the greater disadvantage from, *ib.*; concentration of Union army in, known to Stuart but not to Lee, 161.
- Pennsylvania, Military Department of, see Department of Pennsylvania.
- Pennsylvania Volunteers, 1st City (Philadelphia) Cavalry, with Patterson, July, 1861, 174; three months militia in Thomas' brigade, 1861, 173; 5th Corps formed of, 1862, 80; their march to, and good conduct at Antietam, 80-81; by expiration of term of service 1st division, 5th Corps broken up, 84.
- Penobscot, U. S. gunboat, 103.
- Perryville, Ky., battle of Oct. 8, 1862, 179; Thomas second in command to Buell at, 216; he was not engaged, 179; ignorant that a battle was being fought, 217; prejudice against him surmised, because of his inactivity at, 216; Buell's orders to Thomas, for battle, 216-217; Buell, being ill, took no part, 217.
- Petersburg, Va., McClellan's neglected



- chance in 1862, to seize, 116; its importance in the defence of Richmond, 43; defended by Beauregard, 1864, 4; his apprehensions for, April, 1864, 10; the surrender of contemplated in his plan of May 18, 12; estimate of Confederate forces at June 15, 15; Grant's plans against, 13, 14; Union forces before, 15-16; outer works carried, June 15, 14; Grant's orders indefinite as to capture of, 38, 39, 43; the cause of failure to take, June 16, 17, 1864, 88; unimproved chance for 5th Corps to enter, 16; Lee's army sent to, 17; unsuccessfully assaulted, *ib.*; might have been taken June 18, *ib.*; mine exploded, July 30, 18, 63; Hancock prevented from continuing at siege of, 63; the feint to draw Lee's troops from, 63-65; Grant's siege of, 43; 87; the number of men transported to, winter of 1864-1865, 272; Lee's army before, close of 1864, 134; his position at, not changed by Sherman's operations, 149; not abandoned by Lee until after Five Forks, 263; Lee withdrew from, April 2, 91, 149; occupied by Union forces, 67; conditions for capture of Lee after, different from those at Nashville, 192.
- Petersburg and Richmond Railway, in possession of Union forces, May, 1864, 11.
- Pettigrew, J. J., Brig.-Gen., C. S. A., prisoners from his division taken at Gettysburg, 60.
- Pettus, E. W., Brig.-Gen., C. S. A., of Stevenson's division, at Missionary Ridge, 238 note 3.
- Philadelphia, Pa., its possession of little value to the British, 134; 1st City Cavalry of, with Patterson, 1861, 173.
- Pickett, G. E., Maj.-Gen., C. S. A., at Molino del Rey, 51; at Gettysburg, 182; his attack, July 3, 1863, on Cemetery Ridge, 49; prisoners taken from at Gettysburg, 60; his attack on Sheridan, at Dinwiddie C. H., March 31, 90.
- Pickett's Mills, Ga., Thomas in engagements at, 190.
- Pillow, G. J. Brig.-Gen., C. S. A., at Fort Donelson, 25; his statement of total strength there, 231.
- Piper's House, Antietam, 58.
- Pittsburg Landing, Tenn., occupied by Grant March 10, 1862, 129, 232; Grant's position well chosen, 26; battle of, see Shiloh.
- Pleasanton, A., Bvt. Maj.-Gen., U. S. A., failed to capture Stuart, raid of Oct. 1862, 158.
- Plymouth, N. C., troops called to Richmond from, May, 1864, 11.
- Polk, L., Lieut.-Gen., C. S. A., in command at Columbus, 1861, 24; in command of Bragg's right wing at Chickamauga, 223; his attack on Union left, began battle of Sept. 20, *ib.*; his strength, 225, 228; he attacked Thomas with Hill's and Walker's corps, 225; his failure in attack, 224, 225, 226; did not join Johnston prior to May 11, 1864, 188.
- Pope, J., Brig.-Gen., U. S. A., Stuart's Aug., 1862, raid in rear of his army, 158; McClellan believed the army would obey only him after defeat of, 117; his defeat attributed to McClellan, 119; losses in his Virginia Campaign, 34; did not continue in active command till end of war, 247.
- Porter, F. J., Maj.-Gen., U. S. V., appointed in advance of Thomas, Brig.-Gen., May 17, 1861, 174, 213; Patterson's Adjutant-General, *ib.*; at Gaines' Mill, 57; his 5th Corps, of Pennsylvania troops, 80; succeeded by Meade, 84.
- Port Gibson, Miss., Confederates under Bowen defeated May 1, 1863, by Grant at, 233.
- Port Hudson, La., Grant urged to join Banks to operate against, spring of 1863, 233.
- Potomac, Army of, see Army of the Potomac.
- Potomac River, crossed by Patterson, July 2, 1861, at Williamsport, 173; U. S. fleet of gunboats in, 1862, 103; question of garrisons for forts on, 107; Stuart in his Oct., 1862, raid crossed at McCoy's Ferry, 158; on his return at White's Ferry, *ib.*; crossed by Stuart at Rowser's Ford, Gettysburg Campaign, 160.
- Potter, R. B., Bvt. Maj.-Gen., U. S. V., his assault, June 17, at Petersburg, 15.
- Pratzen, Heights of capture of, compared to the capture of Missionary Ridge, 133.
- Prentiss, B. M., Brig.-Gen., U. S. V., appointed May 17, 1861, 174.
- Presidency, nomination for, declined by Thomas, 1867, 201-202.

- President, U. S. man-of-war, built by D. Humphreys, 74.
- Price, S., Maj.-Gen., C. S. A., in Missouri, 1861, 24; Grant's affair at Belmont to prevent re-enforcing, *ib.*; his escape at Inka, 27.
- Prime, W. C., editor of "Own Story," his sketch of McClellan cited, 99; 102.
- Prussian army, the value of railroads for supplying, during siege of Paris, winter of 1870-1871, 272.
- Railroads, their use in time of war, 270; their value to the U. S. during civil war, 271-272.
- Randall, F. V., Col., U. S. V., his 13th regt. Vermont Volunteers at Cemetery Ridge, July 3, 1863, 50.
- Randall, S. J., recommended the promotion of Thomas as Brig.-Gen., 173-174; a private in 1st Phila. cavalry, 174.
- Rapidan River Va., 10, 87; crossed by Grant, May 3, 1864, 66, 133, 265.
- Rappahannock, River, Va., 40, 84, 87.
- Rawlins, J. A., Brig.-Gen., U. S. V., Grant's Chief-of-Staff, 259.
- Reams' Station, Va., on Weldon railroad, disastrous affair of August 25, 1864, at, 66.
- Reconstruction Committee of Congress, Thomas' testimony before, 1866, 202.
- Recruiting stopped, April, 1862, by U. S. Govt., 250; the call for 300,000 men, 250-251.
- Reed's Bridge, Chickamauga River, battle of Chickamauga began at, 221; Thomas' position on road to Rossville from, Sept. 19, 222.
- Resaca, Ga., Sherman's lost chance to strike enemy at, 135, 188; Thomas in battle of, 190.
- Revolution, War of, the possession of cities of little value to the British, Washington unconquered, 134.
- Reynolds, A. W., Brig.-Gen., C. S. A., estimate of his brigade in battle of Missionary Ridge, 238 note 1.
- Reynolds, J. J., Maj.-Gen., U. S. V., in command of 4th division, 14th Corps, left wing, battle of Chickamauga, his position Sept. 19, 222; fatal message carried to Rosecrans, that the right of his division was exposed, 226; said to have been communicated to Capt. Kellogg by, 229; one of Brannan's brigades on line of his right, 244; Wood ordered to his support Sept. 20, 227; Wood told by Thomas that his support was not needed by, *ib.*
- Rice's Station, Va., an alternative in Lee's plan of escape, 92; Longstreet abandoned it, as a chance of escape, April 2, *ib.*
- Richardson, I. B., Maj.-Gen., U. S. V., mortally wounded at Antietam, 58.
- Richmond, Va., plans of U. S. Govt. against, disconcerted, 1862, by Stonewall Jackson, 250; McDowell not expected to participate in May operations before, 116; the James River, McClellan's best route to, 116; McClellan forced to the James from, *ib.*; Butler in movement on, 1864, 254; value of Petersburg to, 43; Beauregard called to defence of, April, 1864, 10; his plans involved surrender of, 12; Union advance on, May, 1864, 11; Grant's plans not known at, 1864, 10; troops called to defence of, May, 1864, 11; operations against from the south blocked, 12; threatened by Sheridan May, 1864, 162; hope of capture by cavalry, July, 1865, 63, Lee's army before, close of 1864, 134; Lee's dispositions before, not changed by Sherman's operations, 149; not abandoned by Lee until after Five Forks, 263; evacuated, 19, 67; its evacuation anticipated by Beauregard, 4, 18; only a military position to him, 5, 12, 18.
- Richmond, Confederate Government at, see Confederate Government.
- Ridgely, S. C., a cadet at West Point, 1827-1831, 75.
- Ringgold, Ga., Crittenden's corps sent to, in pursuit of Bragg, Sept., 1863, 220.
- Rio Grande, Thomas stationed on, 1845, 168.
- Ripley, R. S., Brig.-Gen., C. S. A., his History cited as to Thomas' services at Buena Vista, 169.
- "Rock of Chickamauga," name earned by Thomas, 182.
- Roman, A., Col., C. S. A., his book on Beauregard reviewed, 3-20; his criticism of Davis and Lee, 5; cited as to operations at Charleston, 1863, 9; estimate of effectives at Petersburg, 15; his account of mine explosion valuable, 18; his book important, 20.
- Rome, Ga., Bragg believed to be retreating to, Sept., 1863, 220.

Rosecrans, W. S., Maj.-Gen., U. S. V., Confederates routed at Corinth by, Oct. 3-4, 1862, 217; his loss, *ib.*; his share of credit for battle of Corinth, 27; Buell superseded in command of Army of Cumberland by, Oct. 30, 1862, 179, 216; promoted over Thomas, *ib.*; this appointment given for his success at Corinth, 217; his movement from Nashville, against Bragg, Dec. 26, 1862, *ib.*; Bragg's army encountered near Murfreesboro', *ib.*; battle of Stone's River, near Murfreesboro', Tenn., Dec. 31, 1862-Jan. 3, 1863, 179-180, 217-220; his position, 218; his strength at, *ib.*; Confederate position, *ib.*; the Confederate strength, *ib.*; plan of each commander to attack with his left wing, *ib.*; Bragg's attack on the right wing, *ib.*; Union attack abandoned, that the right might be sustained, *ib.*; Davis and Sheridan took brunt of attack and were forced back, *ib.*; the flank of division turned on extreme right, *ib.*; forces sent to support of right wing by, 218, 219; troops led by, in last assault on right wing, *ib.*; enemy driven into woods by Rousseau, *ib.*; his left wing not in peril, 219; only part of the forces of the left wing maintained their original position, 220; the battle saved by Thomas, 179-180; Bragg retreated, Jan. 3, 1863, the Tennessee, below Chattanooga, crossed by, 220; Bragg's line of communications threatened by, *ib.*; Chattanooga occupied by, *ib.*; Bragg pursued by, *ib.*; Union line moved to Chickamauga River, Sept. 18, 1863, *ib.*; his headquarters at Widow Glenn's house, 244, the battle of Chickamauga, Sept. 19-20, 1863, 181-182, 221-230; Thomas placed on left flank of, 221; attack on Bragg near Reed's Bridge, *ib.*; Bragg failed in his counter attack, 221; Confederate dispositions for Sept. 20, 222; Union plan for battle settled in council, night of Sept. 19, *ib.*; his dispositions for Sept. 20, *ib.*; the Union line inspected morning of Sept. 20, by Thomas and, 244; dispositions changed by Thomas' request, 222; Thomas' lines further concentrated morning of Sept. 20, *ib.*; the Union strength, 225, 228; the Confederate strength, *ib.*; the battle of 20th begun by Confederate

attack, under Polk, on left flank of, 221, 223-224; extended by degrees over four of the Union divisions, 224; enemy repulsed everywhere prior to 10 A. M., *ib.*; attack on extreme left most serious, *ib.*; the line penetrated by enemy between 10.30 and 11 A. M., *ib.*; the left re-enforced, 224-225; the attack on Union left repulsed without the aid of re-enforcements sent by, 226; the error in movement of Wood's division, 226-227, 229-230, 243-244; question of the fatal message discussed, *ib.*; his letter to Col. Livermore, Jan. 13, 1862, concerning the position of Brannan's division, 244; consequences of the error, the enemy under Hood entered the gap left by withdrawal of Wood, 227; captures made by Hood from Wood's rear, *ib.*; no mention by Thomas in his report, of the message, 229; Thomas' action in ordering Wood to his left without reference to, criticised, 230; the number of Union right wing swept away by Hood, 227-228; Longstreet's attack on the Union right, 226, Thomas attacked about 2 P. M. by Longstreet, 228; enemy repulsed, 229; the forces remaining on Union right after sending re-enforcements to the left, 226; Thomas ordered to position at Rossville, between 3 and 4 P. M., 228; retreated to Rossville about 5.30 P. M., 229; new position at Rossville, *ib.*; roads from Chickamauga to Chattanooga, 222; question as to defence of main road to Chattanooga, 221-223; Union right wing routed and dispersed, Sept. 20, 182; saved by Thomas, 131, 182; position at Chattanooga, 32; his preparations for operations, 33; superseded by Thomas in command of Army of the Cumberland, Oct. 19, 1863, 131, 182; a hero of the Army of the Cumberland, 129, his skillful manoeuvres Aug. 16-Sept. 18, 1863, in Chickamauga campaign, 181; his bravery and resolution in that battle, 220; did not remain in active command until the end of the war, 247. Rossville, Ga., Thomas' position, Sept. 19, on road to, 222; not the only road to Chattanooga, 223; Thomas suspected attempt of enemy to cut his communications with, Sept. 20, 224; Sheridan joined Thomas at

- nightfall Sept 20, 227; movement of Granger from, Sept. 20, to support Thomas in attack from Longstreet, 228; Thomas retreated to, about 5.30 P. M., 229; he secured his new position at, without much loss, *ib.*; Rosecrans after Chickamauga retired to, 182; Thomas' faculty for meeting emergencies instanced in movement to, 205-206.
- Round Top, Gettysburg, Humphreys' position on, 84.
- Rousseau, L. H., Maj.-Gen., U. S. V., in command of 2d division, under Thomas at Stone's River, his strength, 218; in reserve, *ib.*, ordered to right wing, *ib.*; repulsed, 219; re-formed on new line, *ib.*; enemy repulsed and driven into the woods by, *ib.*
- Rowser's Ford, Potomac River, crossed by Stuart, in advance to Gettysburg, 160.
- Ruger, T. H., Bvt. Brig.-Gen., U. S. V., a cadet at West Point, 1850-1854, under Thomas' instruction, 169.
- Russia, conjecture as to the result of Napoleon's campaign in, aided by railroads, 272.
- St. Louis, Mo., Camp Jackson, broken up by Gen. Lyon, 175.
- Sailor's Creek, Va., engagement at April 6, 1865, 92; Gordon's losses at, *ib.*
- Salient, the attack on, not well conceived, 37; Hancock's services in the capture of, May 12, 1864, 62-63.
- Salt Lake City, Thomas' report on the Colorado River as a route of communication with, 171.
- Savannah, Ga., its possession of little value to the British, 1781, 134; the possession of, not Sherman's object, 134; Sherman's march to, projected, 137, 138, 141; besieged by Sherman, 143; his threat to Hardee at, 146; a Christmas gift to Lincoln, 144; gravity of its loss to the Confederacy, 19; effect of surrender of, 144; Sherman's admirably conducted march to, 268; his still more brilliant march from, *ib.*; Sherman's march northward from, begun Feb. 1, 1865, 18, 145; his small cavalry force in march to, 260.
- Savannah River, 138.
- Savannah, Tenn., eight miles from Pittsburg Landing, 233; conference with Buell evening of April 5, cause of Grant's absence from Pittsburg Landing morning of April 6, 233; Grant's headquarters at, 129.
- Schoepf, A., Brig.-Gen., U. S. A., his command ordered Dec. 29, 1861, to attack Confederates at Mill Springs, Ky., 213; Crittenden's plan to attack Thomas before he could be joined by, 214; Thomas' delay in waiting for, questioned, 215.
- Schofield, J. M., Maj.-Gen., U. S. A., under Sherman's command, 1864, 135; his strength at beginning of Atlanta campaign, 188; his losses, 189; his retreat to Franklin, Nov., 1864, 142, 143; the risk to Thomas by his position at Franklin and Spring Hill, 241; Sherman's letter to, Oct. 17, 1864, 146; re-enforced Sherman at Goldsboro', N. C., 145; at Army Reunion, Chicago, 1868, 198.
- Schraeder, A. von, Lieut.-Col., Assist. Inspector General, 14th army Corps, said to have reported to Thomas that Reynold's right was exposed, Sept. 20, Chickamauga, 229.
- Schurz, C., Maj.-Gen., U. S. V., at Army Reunion, Chicago, 1868, 198.
- Scott, T. A., Assist. Sec'y of War, 1861-1862, Thomas recommended for appointment as Brig.-Gen., to, 173-174.
- Scott, Winfield, Lieut.-Gen., U. S. A., Hancock with, in Mexico, 51; 168; a Virginian loyal to the Union, 166, 213; Beauregard's plan to exterminate, 6.
- Second Corps, U. S. A., command of 1st division, given to Hancock at Antietam, 57-58; Hancock succeeded Couch in command of, June 24, 1863, 52, 59-60; his care of, 53; in battles of the Wilderness, May 5, 6, 1864, 62; capture of the Salient, May 12, 62-63; crossed the James June 14, 1864, 14; two divisions before Petersburg, June 15, 15; the third division, also, June 16, 15, 16; disaster of Reams' Station, Aug. 25, 1864, 66; Humphreys given command of, Nov. 26, 1864, 89; his former relations with, 89-90; its last commander, 73; in pursuit of Lee, April 2-8, 91-94; its losses, 40; Walker's history of, 94.
- Sedgwick, J., Maj.-Gen., U. S. V., Major, 1st U. S. Cavalry, 1855, 170.
- Selma, Ala., project of a movement by Thomas to, 142.
- Seminary Ridge, Gettysburg, advance

- of Confederates from, July 3, 49, 50.
- Seminole War, Florida, Hancock served in, 51; Humphreys' service in, 76; Thomas' service in, 167.
- Seven Days Battles, June 25-July 1, 1862, Union losses in, 34.
- Seven Pines, or Fair Oaks, battle of May 31-June 1, 1862, not fought as intended by Johnston, 256; Hancock not engaged, 57; Union loss at, 34.
- Shenandoah Valley, Va., Johnston in command in, 1861, 5; Jackson's expedition to, 1862, 108; his strategy in, 256; Banks sent to protect, 107, 108; McDowell's expedition to, 116-117; cavalry fighting of old style, campaign of 1864, 156; destruction by Sheridan of Lee's army in, 134; Sheridan's victory in, no greater than Thomas' at Nashville, 192; Grant's 1865 plans for employment of Sheridan in, 259.
- Sheridan, P. H., General, U. S. A., a cadet at West Point, 1848-1853, under Thomas' instruction, 169; the battle at Boonville, Mo., July 1, 1862, the first planned by him, 204; at battle of Stone's River, 180, 218; his resistance of enemy, *ib.*; forced back, Dec. 31, *ib.*; Rousseau sent to his right and rear, *ib.*; re-enforced by Thomas, 180, 205; no evidence that Thomas sent a brigade to relief of, 219; his aid to left wing, 220; his manoeuvres at Stone's River, likened to Humphreys' at Gettysburg, 85; at battle of Chickamanga, ordered to send two brigades to support Thomas, Sept. 20, 224; in moving towards Thomas, attacked by Hood's force, 227, forced back, *ib.*; did not join Thomas until nightfall, at Rossville, *ib.*; Thomas attacked by Longstreet when he expected, 228; his strength in going to Thomas' aid, *ib.*; in command of 2d division, 4th Corps, his forces with Wood's captured Orchard Knob, Nov. 23, 1863, 184; participated in the assault by which Missionary Ridge was captured, 237; the share of his division in the victory at Chattanooga, 133; the 1864 Va. campaign gave opportunities for display of his abilities, 61; incident of his vigilance, 64-65; U. S. cavalry improved by, winter of 1863-1864, 162; the strength of his force, 1864, *ib.*; Confederate Shenandoah army destroyed by, 134; his mistaken expeditions, 1864, 259; his uncertainty as to employment in Appomattox Campaign, *ib.*; his expedition to Dinwiddie, C. H., 90; Five Forks, the last battle planned by him, 204; Humphreys' efforts not surpassed by, in pursuit of Lee, 91, 95; across Lee's path, April 7, 94; in pursuit of, April 8, *ib.*; his position, April 8, *ib.*; Lee's line of retreat from Appomattox, held by, 257; his great achievements in the Appomattox campaign, 66, 260; the utility of his service, 262; a demonstration of best use of cavalry, 259, 262; his victories in the Shenandoah and at Five Forks compared with Thomas' at Nashville, 192; compared with McClellan, 122; the hero of the cavalry, 95.
- Sherman, John, U. S. Senator, early recognition of the merits of Gen. Sherman, due to, 166.
- Sherman, T. W., Bvt. Maj.-Gen., U. S. A., Thomas with, at Buena Vista, 168.
- Sherman, W. T., General, U. S. A., a cadet at West Point, 1836-1840, 128; his service in California during Mexican war, *ib.*; left the army, 1853, *ib.*; commissioned Colonel in regular army, at the beginning of the Rebellion, *ib.*; Brigadier-General of Volunteers, May 17, 1861, *ib.*; the early recognition of his merits due to his brother John, 166; commanded a brigade at Bull Run, *ib.*; 150, 239; transferred to Kentucky Aug. 28, 1861, *ib.*; in command of Army of the Cumberland, Oct. 8, *ib.*; voluntarily resigned the command, *ib.*; superseded by Buell, Nov. 9, *ib.*; transferred to Department of Mississippi, *ib.*; Thomas promoted to rank of Major-Gen. in advance of him, 215; his estimate of force necessary for opening the Mississippi, 1861, 247; his sagacious advice not heeded, 248; in command of a division at battle of Shiloh, 129; surprised at Shiloh, 4, 8, 26, 27, 130, 250; his claim that he was not surprised at Shiloh doubted, 26, 130, 132; his statement sustained, 231-233; his despatch to Grant, April 5, 1862, considered as evidence that the Union army was surprised at Shiloh, April 6, 232; his prediction

of nothing but picket-firing April 5, justified, *ib.*; some of his troops not demoralized April 6, 26; his services at Shiloh, 239; his distinction won there, 129; his conduct above praise, 130; his successful engagement at Corinth, May 28, 1862, 239; his unsuccessful expedition against Vicksburg, Dec., 1862, *ib.*; his unsuccessful operations at Chickasaw Bayou, Dec. 28-29, 1862, 29; his share in Vicksburg campaign, 1863, 239; Arkansas Post captured by Jan. 11, 1863, *ib.*; summoned by Grant to Chattanooga, Oct. 1863, 131, 132; the attack postponed from Nov. 21 to 25, because of his delay, 184; part of Army of the Tenn. brought up by, 234; the main attack assigned to him, 184, 185; that Grant intended him to take the chief part in battle questioned, 236; his failure to make an impression, 132, 133; held in check at railway tunnel, 33, 184, 185; re-enforcements sent to, not required, 236; Thomas' attack on rifle-pits intended as a diversion in favor of, 132, 133; the assertion not sustained, 236; his statement that Bragg massed his troops against him, disproved, 186; his loss, 33, 185-186; his strength greater than Thomas', 186; his strength smaller than Thomas', 237; strength of force opposed to him, 185, 186, 238; the loss of rebels in his front, 185; intended by Grant to cut off Bragg's retreat, *ib.*; his account of battle colored by personal feelings, 132; as Grant's favorite officer appointed to the command of the Military Division of the Mississippi, March 12, 1864, 133, 187, 238; extent of his command, 238; the claims of a class of Thomas' admirers made to the disparagement of, examined, 211-244; the claims stated, 211-212; Thomas' junior in rank and command, 187; the variety of his services not so large as Thomas', 203; his services and Thomas' compared, 239 *et seq.*; Thomas' reputation lessened by the prejudice and indifference to historic truthfulness of, 190; Thomas' glory obscured by, 207; the opinion that Thomas would have conducted the Atlanta campaign better than, 207; Thomas believed by Grant not so competent to conduct the campaign as, 206; the

proposition that the command should have been given to Thomas instead of to, discussed, 239; his strength at beginning of 1864 campaign, 135; ordered to make Johnston's army his object, not the capture of cities, 134; evaded by Johnston, 136; he adopted Thomas' plans in Atlanta campaign but bungled in executing them, 187-188; his lost chance to defeat Johnston at Resaca, 135; Kennesaw Mountain battle not to his credit, *ib.*; slight allusion in his report to affair at Peach Tree Creek, 190; the privilege of capture of Atlanta, July 22, reserved for his own army, 189; the city not captured then, *ib.*; his difficult position after capture of Atlanta, 136, 137; his possession of Atlanta of little value, Hood unconquered, 138; his army stalemated, 139; his plans after Sept. 2, 1864, 137-138; his army concentrated at Gaylesville, Ala., 138; surprised by Hood's October raid, *ib.*; his communications with Chattanooga cut, *ib.*; re-established, *ib.*; his experiment to draw Hood into battle unsuccessful, 136, 139; his difficulties in a pursuit of Hood, 139-140; his wish to destroy Hood, 139; Thomas sent to Chattanooga, *ib.*; Johnston's and Hood's armies not destroyed by, 134, 135, 136, 139; the destruction of Hood assigned to Thomas by, 134, 140, 141, 142, 191; project against Savannah, 138; his project of the "March through Georgia," 141; suggested by Thomas, 191; unwillingness of Grant to accede to the plan, 141; obtained permission for his march from Grant, Nov. 2, 142; Thomas given the two weakest corps of, 191; the paucity of forces assigned to Thomas, 144-145, 151; the number of forces assigned to Thomas for operations in Tenn., 240, 240 note 5; the strength of Hood's force, *ib.*; assured by Thomas that he would have men enough, 241; Thomas' force sufficient, *ib.*; his instructions to Thomas, *ib.*; his expectations from him, 142; his confidence in, 241, 242; his dependence on, justified, 145; ignorant of his difficulties, 152; the army destroyed at Nashville which had not been overthrown by, 191; the misfortunes imperilled by Sherman's withdrawal of a part of his army into Georgia, 144; the proposi-

tion that the national cause was imperilled by his Georgia campaign of 1864, discussed, 240 *et seq.*; the strength of his army, 143; its size criticized, 144, 145; unable to form a conjecture of Hood's plans, 240-241; his problem had been followed by Hood, 242; the march begun, Nov. 15, 1864, 143, 241; the necessities and difficulties of his march, 241-242; his plan of living on the invaded country justified, 147-148; the fortunate results of the march, 143; admirably conducted, 268; Savannah besieged, 143; his threat to Hardee, 146; Savannah captured Dec. 21, 144, 152; a Christmas gift to Lincoln, 144; compared with Cornwallis, 145; the hero of the day, 144; the exultation over the success of, *ib.*: left Savannah, Feb. 1, 1865, 18, 145; his march through the Carolinas, 4, 9, 19, 268; opposed by Johnston and Beauregard, 18; would have been confronted by a formidable army had the advice of Beauregard and Johnston been taken, 256; his advantage in having only the remnant of Hood's army to contend with, 145; his movement to Columbia, *ib.*; his engagement at Averysboro', *ib.*; at Bentonville, *ib.*; his over-confidence there, 204; re-enforced by Schofield at Goldsboro', 145; plan for Sheridan to join him in the Carolinas, 259, 260; negotiations for surrender of Johnston begun, April 14, 146, 150; Johnston's surrender April 26, 20, 151; his characteristics of boldness in action and speech, 127; a brilliant strategist, 19, 257; his skillful strategy in Atlanta campaign, 256; his fertility in expedients, 137, 138; his masterly manœuvres, 145; the skill with which he used his advantages, *ib.*; a marvellous provider for his army, 135, 137; his conservation of his army, 135; his army in better condition than ever before, at beginning of 1864 campaign, 266; fighting under, severe, but losses not large, Atlanta campaign, 267; his campaigns in Georgia and the Carolinas displayed the possibilities of an American army, 268; honor paid him, 127; a hero of the Army of the Tennessee, 129; idolized by his men, 267; possessed the confidence of Grant, *ib.*; his harmonious

relations with Grant, 130-131; his incessant activity and prompt support of Grant, 239; compared with Humphreys, 95; Lincoln's support of, 254; the last of the conspicuously successful Union generals, 247; his right to his great reputation questioned, 150-151; evidences of his great generalship, 204; the advantage gained by his march questioned, 151; his unnecessary destruction of property criticized, 147-150; his policy of devastation discussed, 146-149; his despatches to Grant, Beckwith, Halleck and Schofield, promising to punish Georgia and South Carolina, 146-147; his want of success in independent actions, 204; his assumption of political responsibilities, 150; his neglect of details in battles of July, 1864, near at Atlanta, 257; the fighting qualities of the cavalry minimized by, 192; his indifference to the use of cavalry, 260; contrasted with Grant and Thomas, 150; advantage to Grant had Thomas been taken into favor instead of, 178; at Army Reunion, Chicago, 1868, 198.

Shiloh, battle of April 6-7, 1862, 4, 8, 18, 26-27, 129-130, 231-233; Confederate strength, 231; Union strength, *ib.*; the Confederate plan, 7-8, 26, 129, 232; the Confederates surprised by Union attack, 232; the Union army surprised, 4, 8, 26, 27, 130, 250; the statements of Grant and Sherman that they were not surprised, 232; the charge of a surprise refuted by Halleck, 233; evidence in Record that the Union Army was not surprised, 231-233; Grant repulsed April 6, by A. S. Johnston, 26, 130, 231; Johnston killed, 26; Beauregard in command April 7, 26; Grant, re-enforced, defeated Beauregard, April 7, 27, 130, 231, 250; Confederate loss, 231; Union loss, 34, 231; discussion of Grant's ability as displayed at 26-27, Sherman's ability displayed at, 129, 130, 239; Thomas not engaged, 178; fighting at, not comparable with that of the Wilderness, 35; Army of the Cumberland reorganized after, 215.

Sickles, D. E., Maj.-Gen., U. S. V., at Chancellorsville, 159; in command of 3d Corps. 84.

Sigel, F., Maj.-Gen., U. S. V., appointed

- Brig.-Gen., U. S. V., May 17, 1861, 174.
- Sixth Corps, U. S. A., Hancock promoted from command of a brigade of. at Antietam, 58; at the capture of the Salient, May 12, 1864, 62; at Petersburg and Bermuda Hundred, June 16, 15, 16; in pursuit of Lee, 91, 92, 94.
- Sixteenth Corps, U. S. A., under A. J. Smith, with Thomas in Tennessee, 191.
- Slavery, Thomas' dislike of, 197; McClellan's advice to Lincoln concerning, 114-115.
- Slocum, H. W., Maj.-Gen., U. S. V., a cadet at West Point, 1848-1852, under Thomas' instruction, 169; at Chancellorsville, 159; at Army Remunio, Chicago, 1868, 198.
- Smith, A. J., Bvt. Maj.-Gen., U. S. A., in command of 16th Corps, with Thomas in Tennessee, 191; at Nashville, Nov. 30, 1864, 142; his strength, *ib.*
- Smith, C. F., Maj.-Gen., U. S. V., on the death of, his place filled by Thomas, 178.
- Smith, J. E., Brig.-Gen., U. S. V., in command of 2d division, 17th Corps, under Sherman at Chattanooga, 237.
- Smith, Kirby, Lieut.-Gen., C. S. A., Davis' project to continue the war by uniting Johnston's with forces of, 20.
- Smith, M. L., Brig.-Gen., U. S. V., in command of 2d division, 15th Corps, under Sherman at Chattanooga, 237.
- Smith, W. F., Bvt. Maj.-Gen., U. S. A., in co-operation with Thomas at Chattanooga, 183; his services there, 255; desired by Grant for command of Army of the James, *ib.*; in command of 18th Corps, May 2-July 19, 1864, at Cold Harbor, 13; sent to attack Petersburg, 14; captured outer works before Petersburg, June 15, 14, 15; Hancock and Meade ignorant of plan that Petersburg should be taken by, 88.
- Smithsonian Institution, Thomas' contributions to, 170.
- Snake Creek, Tenn., in battle of Shiloh, 26.
- Snake Creek Gap, Ga., in Thomas' plan of movement on Resaca, 188, 191; McPherson's operations at, 135, 188; Sherman's failure to move on Resaca, through, *ib.*
- Snodgrass House, Chickamauga Valley, road to Rossville by way of, 223.
- Somerset, Ky., Schoepf's command at, Dec., 1861, 213, 215; Thomas at, Jan. 1862, 176.
- South or Southern States, see United States, Southern States.
- Southampton Co., Va., a sword given to Thomas for services in Mexican War, by citizens of, 168.
- South Carolina, Sherman's proposition to punish, 146, 147, 149.
- South Mountain, battle of Sept. 14, 1862, glorified by McClellan, 118, 119.
- South Side Railroad, Va., possession of, gained by Miles, 91.
- Spottsylvania, Va., Grant's strategy at, 36; his failure at, 37; extraordinary fighting of Union army at, 40; mentioned, 61, 87.
- Spring Hill, Tenn., Schofield's position at, a cause of risk to Thomas, 241.
- Stanley, D. S., Bvt. Maj.-Gen., U. S. A., a cadet at West Point, 1848-1852, under Thomas' instruction, 169.
- Stannard, G. J., Brig.-Gen., U. S. V., his forces on Cemetery Ridge, July 3, 1863, 50; his effective flank attack, 51.
- Stanton, E. M., Sec'y of War, 1862-1868, his congratulatory order after battle of Logan's Cross Roads, 177; McClellan's announcement of his disposition of the army to, April 1, 1862, 108; Halleck's refutation of charge that the Union army was surprised at Shiloh in report to, 233; McClellan's letter of June 28, to, 111; his letter to, resenting McDowell's independent command, 113; charged by McClellan as the cause of his failure, 117; his attribution of Pope's defeat at Bull Run to McClellan, 119; his orders disregarded by McClellan, 120; Humphreys' report of his march to Antietam in letter to, 81; his approbation of Thomas, 183.
- Steam-vessels, their aid in time of war, 269-270.
- Stedman, Fort, see Fort Stedman.
- Steedman, J. B., Maj.-Gen., U. S. V., at Chickamauga, 223; Thomas' most energetic division commander, 193; sent to intercept Hood in retreat to Tenn. River, *ib.*; his detention at Murfreesboro', Dec. 20-22, 1864, *ib.*; failure of his errand, *ib.*; injuries to Hood inflicted by, Dec. 31, *ib.*
- Stevens' Gap, Lookout Mountain,



- Thomas' Corps sent to, Sept., 1863, in pursuit of Bragg, 220.
- Stevenson, Tenn., 193.
- Stewart, A. P., Maj.-Gen., C. S. A., at Missionary Ridge, 238 note 4.
- Stone, C. P., Brig.-Gen., U. S. V., commanded brigade under Patterson, July, 1861, 174; appointed May 17, *ib.*, 213.
- Stoneman, G., Maj.-Gen., U. S. A., energetic cavalry commander, with Thomas, 1864, 194.
- Stone's River, near Murfreesborough, Tenn., battle of Dec. 31, 1862,–Jan. 3, 1863, 179–180, 217–220; Confederates under Bragg, Union forces under Rosecrans, 217; Union strength, 218, Confederate strength, *ib.*; Thomas commanded a corps, 230; his position the centre, 180; his strength, *ib.*, Union position and disposition of forces, 218; Confederate position, *ib.*; each commander planned to attack with his left wing, *ib.*; Bragg's attack so vigorous that Rosecrans' was suspended, *ib.*; the extreme Union right flank turned, *ib.*; within hour the right wing driven from the field, 180; Davis and Sheridan forced back, *ib.*, 218; a brigade sent to support Sheridan by Thomas, 180; no evidence in Record that the brigade was sent, 219; the right wing strengthened by forces from centre and left wing, 218–219; led to position by Rosecrans, 219; Rousseau from the centre repulsed, *ib.*; then repulsed the enemy, *ib.*; Thomas unmoved, 180; part of left wing only kept their original position, 220; the left wing not threatened with disaster, 219–220; the right wing not saved by Thomas alone, 219; his loss, 180; he was not in command of battle, 220; his firmness, bravery and resolution, 180, 220; displayed his ability in an emergency, 205, 219; the bravery and resolution of Rosecrans, 220; aid to left wing given by Sheridan, *ib.*; his manoeuvres like Humphreys' at Gettysburg, 85; Thomas' successful charge, Jan. 2, 180; the cause of Bragg's retreat, *ib.*; the Army of the Tennessee had no battle to fight like this, 131.
- Stone Wall, Marye's Heights, Fredericksburg, Hancock's losses at, Dec. 13, 1862, 59; Humphreys' assault, 82.
- Stuart, J. E. B., Maj.-Gen., C. S. A., his Life by H. B. McClellan reviewed, 155–162; a cadet at West Point, 1850–1854, under Thomas' instruction, 170; with Jackson at Falling Waters, 1861, 173; at Bull Run, 1861, 157; his raid round Union army, June, 1862, 158; his August raid, *ib.*; his Oct. raid in Maryland and Pennsylvania, 158, 261, its futility, *ib.*; given command of Jackson's Corps at Chancellorsville, May 2, 1863, 159; his distinguished service there, *ib.*; his service at Brandy Station, 1863, 157, 159; at Aldie Gap, 157, 159; at Middleburg, 157, 159; his raid in Gettysburg campaign, 160–162; criticized, *ib.*, 261; Lee deprived of his aid by the raid, 161, 162, 261; his strength, 261; disregarded by Meade, 161, 261; defended by McClellan, 161; in command of the Confederate cavalry in Virginia, 157; poorly equipped and weak, 1863–1864, 162; his services brief in Wilderness campaign, *ib.*; mortally wounded at Yellow Tavern, *ib.*; his personal appearance and characteristics, 157; a natural leader of cavalry, *ib.*; his most distinguished actions, *ib.*, 159; commended by Johnston and Jackson, at Bull Run, 157; the policy of his raids discussed: their futility, 158, 160, 258, 261–262; the Confederates suffered the greater disadvantage from, 261; Lee's policy in the employment of, not wise, 261–262; his raid of Oct. 1862, the booty acquired not commensurate with the risk run, 158, 261; his strength, *ib.*; his freedom of action in Gettysburg campaign, *ib.*; his objects in the expedition not explained, *ib.*; his failure to aid Lee, *ib.*; the poor results of, *ib.*
- Sumner, E. V., Maj.-Gen., U. S. V., Col., 1st cavalry regt., 1855, 170; Hancock given command of his division at Antietam, 58; his development of the division, 59.
- Sumter, Fort, see Fort Sumter.
- Susquehanna, Department of, see Department of the Susquehanna.
- Sutherlands Station, Va., engagement at, April 2, 1865, 91.
- Swinton, W., cited as to approaching doom of the Confederacy, Feb. 1, 1865, 18.
- Tactical Study of the Battlefield of Chickamauga, a map published by

- the War Department, its incorrect legend in the first issue, 230, 230 note 1, 243-244.
- Tallahatchie River, Miss., available for defensive line, in an advance to Vicksburg, 28.
- Taylor, R., Lieut.-Gen., C. S. A., under Beauregard's command, 1864, 18.
- Taylor, Z., Maj.-Gen., U. S. A., Thomas with in Mexico, 168; his notice of Thomas in report of Buena Vista, 169.
- Tennessee, inadequate provision by Confederates for defence in, 249; under Union control, 1862, *ib.*, 250; Thomas' expedition to, Jan. 1862, 176; the evacuation by Confederates the consequence of capture of Fort Donelson, 7, 129, 271; the eastern part within the Military Division of the Mississippi, 238; Grant's operations in, July-Oct., 1862, 233; 234; Thomas sent to, from Georgia, Sept. 29, 1864, 191; a retreat to, an alternative for Sherman, Oct., 1864, 139; not feasible, a confession of defeat, 140; the control of the U. S. in, imperilled by Sherman, 144; Sherman left Thomas in, with two of his weakest corps, 191; invaded by Hood, 142-143; Thomas honored by, after Nashville, 206; Thomas' success in, an evidence of the merit of an American army, 268; nomination of Thomas for Presidency, 1867, advocated in, 201; Thomas' command after the war, in, 202.
- Tennessee River, Union forces on, 1862, 129; the capture of Forts Henry and Donelson, *ib.*, 231; Grant's advance, 1862, to Pittsburg Landing on, 26; his position on, before battle of Shiloh, 232; Union army forced back to, April 6, 1862, 231; Thomas did not reach, in time to participate at Shiloh, 178; crossed by Rosecrans in Sept. 1863, advancing on Chickamauga, 220; Bragg forced across, into Chattanooga, 181; forces brought up to Chattanooga, Nov. 25, 1863, from, 234; Hood's dangers in crossing, 140; Thomas expected to hold the line of, 142; Schofield's retreat from, Nov. 1864, *ib.*; Thomas' pursuit of Hood from Nashville to, 192-193; failure of Steedman to intercept Hood at, 193; Thomas reached, Dec. 28, 193.
- Tennessee, Volunteers, drilled at Louisville, 175.
- Tennessee, Army of, see Army of the Tennessee.
- Terry, A. H., Bvt. Maj.-Gen., U. S. A., at Army Reunion, Chicago, 1868, 198.
- Texas, Thomas' service in, 1856-1860, 168, 171; left by him, Nov. 1, 1860, 172; his regiment in, surrendered by Twiggs, *ib.*; A. S. Johnston joined Confederate army in, 173.
- Third Corps, U. S. A., under Sickles at Chancellorsville, 84, 159; 2d division commanded by Humphreys, 84; driven from position, July 2, at Gettysburg, 161; employed in cutting Lee's communications, April 1865, 90.
- Thomas, G. H., Maj.-Gen., U. S. A., a soldier of consummate ability, 165, 211-213; his patriotism unimpeachable, 212-213; born in Virginia, 1816, 165; his ancestry, 167; his inherited characteristics, *ib.*; his education in patriotism, 165; his loyalty to the Union at outbreak of the civil war, 166; he was like Scott in supporting the Govt., 213; one of seven loyal Virginians in the army 1862, 166; suspicion excited by his southern birth, *ib.*; his loyalty above suspicion by the Government, 213; his merits not recognized early, 166; promoted from rank of Major to Colonel between April 19 and May 3, 1861, 213; a cadet at West Point, 1836-1840, 167; his interview with J. Y. Mason, *ib.*; his rank at West Point, *ib.*; his soubriquet "George Washington," *ib.*; as 2d Lieut., 3d Artillery in Seminole War, *ib.*; brevetted 1st Lieut., 168; his service in Mexican War, 168-169; his first post, 168; complimented at Monterey, *ib.*; brevetted Captain, *ib.*; his service at Buena Vista, *ib.*; brevetted Major, 169; full Captain, 1853, *ib.*; his varied duties and places of service, 1847-1851, *ib.*; Instructor at West Point, 1851-1854, *ib.*, 170; cadets, afterwards distinguished, under his instruction, 168-170; sent to California, 1854, 170; his scientific occupations there, *ib.*; appointed Major, 2d Cavalry, 1855, *ib.*; stationed in Texas, 171; his report on the Colorado River, July 7, 1857, *ib.*; his reputation in the army, *ib.*; injured in a railroad accident, 172; left Texas, Nov. 1, 1860, on leave of absence, *ib.*; at New York, winter

of 1860-1861, *ib.*; his anxieties because of political affairs, *ib.*; his regiment surrendered by Twiggs, *ib.*; ordered April 10, 1861, to Carlisle Barracks, *ib.*; renewed his oath of allegiance, *ib.*; unknown at Washington, 171; promoted April 25, 1861, to lieutenant-colonelcy in place of R. E. Lee, 173; promoted, May 3, to colonelcy, in place of A. S. Johnston, *ib.*, 213; May 29, assigned to command of brigade under Patterson, 173; June 12, led advance to Potomac, *ib.*; crossed into Va., July 2, *ib.*; in engagement at Falling Waters, *ib.*; not under fire, 213; recommended by S. J. Randall, Aug. 3, for promotion as Brigadier-General, 173; not promoted until Aug. 17, 174; commissioned prior to Abercrombie, 213; preceded in this rank by three of his fellow officers of 1861 Va. campaign, *ib.*; transferred to Anderson's command, Dept. of the Cumberland, 174; disparity of his promotion with that of his fellow officers of regular army, 175; at Louisville, Sept 6, 1861, *ib.*; his uninterrupted devotion to duty, *ib.*; his services in organizing Army of the Cumberland, *ib.*; the seizure of state arms by rebels, prevented by, *ib.*; in Nov. assigned by Buell to command of Union line from London to Columbia in Kentucky, 213; Dec. 29, ordered to oppose Confederate advance at Mill Springs, *ib.*; arrived at Logan's Cross Roads, Jan 17, 214.

Battle of Logan's Cross Roads or Mill Springs: attacked by Crittenden at daylight, Jan. 19, 176, 214; his advance regiments fell back before attack, 176, 214; lack of evidence to indicate a repulse, 214; a charge at 10 A. M., threw Confederates into confusion, 176; the flank charge was made by McCook, *ib.*; Zollicoffer killed, 176, 214; a relentless pursuit, 176; the enemy's guns and supplies captured, 177; the Confederate force never reorganized, *ib.*; the termination of Crittenden's military career, *ib.*; the Confederate strength, 214; the Union strength, 176, 214; the losses of each side, 177, 214; the effect on A. S. Johnston, 177; the effect at Washington, *ib.*, 215; the first Union victory since Bull Run, 177; Thomas' first victory in the West, 191, 204, 205;

230; no evidence in Record that his plan was changed during action from defensive to offensive, 214; his policy of delaying engagement from Jan. 17 to Jan. 19, questioned, 215; the slowness of his march questioned, *ib.*; four of his Colonels promoted in consequence of battle, 177, 215; his services slighted by the Government, 177; his promotion to rank of Maj.-Gen., dependent on reputation earned in this battle, 215.

Feb.-Dec. 1862: transferred to Shiloh, but did not participate in battle, 178; on the recommendation of Buell and Halleck appointed Major-General of Volunteers, 178, 215; chosen by Halleck to command right wing, April 9, 178, 215; Grant made second in command of the army, 216; the cause of his differences with Grant, 178; the right wing at siege of Corinth commanded by, 230; the engagement of May 28, 1862, fought in presence of, 239; renounced command of right wing in June, and rejoined Buell, 178, 216; command of the Army of the Ohio given to, 179; his reasons for refusing the command, *ib.*; his magnanimity in declining to supersede Buell, 216; made second in command of the Army of the Ohio, Sept. 30, 1862, *ib.*; ordered to form line of battle at Perryville, Oct. 7, 1862, *ib.*; not engaged in battle of Perryville, 179, 217; ignorant of the battle, *ib.*; surmise that his inactivity caused a prejudice at Washington, 216; on removal of Buell, the command of army was not given to, 179; the action of Govt. questioned, *ib.*; Rosecrans given Buell's place, instead of, 216, 217; his letter to Halleck of Oct. 30, 1862, 216; his plan of advance to Chattanooga ignored, 179.

Battle of Stone's River: Dec. 31, 1862-Jan. 3, 1863, 179-180, 217-220; in command of the centre, 180, 218; his strength, 180, 218, 230; he saved the army, Dec. 31, 180; that the day was saved by, questioned, 217-218; Sheridan re-enforced by, 180; no evidence that he sent a brigade to relieve Sheridan, 219; Rousseau's division ordered to right wing, 218; repulsed, 219; successful charge made by Rousseau, by permission of, *ib.*; his line did not remain unmoved, *ib.*;

alone did not save the right wing, *ib.*; one of his brigades shattered Breckinridge's division Jan. 2, 1865, 180; his losses, *ib.*; no evidence in Record that he took charge of the field, Dec. 31, 220; his bravery and resolution, *ib.*; immovable in battle and council, 180-181; refused to consider the proposition to retreat, Dec. 31, 1862, *ib.*

Battle of Chickamauga: in the Chickamauga Campaign, sent in pursuit of Bragg to Stevens' Gap, 220; in position at Stevens' and Cooper's Gaps, *ib.*; the battle of Chickamauga, Sept. 19-20, 1863, 181-182, 220-230; his position at Chickamauga, 182; in command of left wing, 221, 230; the surmise of Bragg's intention to block road to Chattanooga questioned, 221-222, 223; the position of his forces, Sept. 19, 222; unaware of Bragg's advance, Sept. 19, *ib.*; his attack near Reed's Bridge met by counter attack by Bragg, *ib.*; Bragg repulsed, *ib.*; the plan for battle of Sept. 20, adopted in council at midnight, *ib.*; the Union line inspected at daylight, Sept. 20, by Rosecrans and, 244; his line concentrated, 222; still further revised, *ib.*; at his request Negley ordered to the left of, 223; his strength, 222-223, 225; Confederate strength, *ib.*; attack on left flank by Polk, 224; the attack extended along his line, *ib.*; repulsed everywhere, *ib.*; attack on Baird, extreme left, most serious, *ib.*; re-enforcements called for, *ib.*; re-enforcements sent, *ib.*, 225; the attack repulsed without aid of re-enforcements, 226; his inability to employ his reserves questioned, *ib.*; the mistake caused by an *aide* of, 226; Capt. Kellogg on his staff, 229, 230, 243; the misfortune caused by removal of Wood's division from the line, 226-227, 229-230, 243-244; Wood ordered to extreme left by, 227; Sheridan diverted by attack from Hood, in attempt to join, 227; the body of the army sent to the support of, 228; his right attacked by Longstreet, *ib.*; the attack repulsed, *ib.*; his strength after 2 p. m., *ib.*; strength of enemy opposed to him, *ib.*; ordered between 3 and 4 p. m. to a new position at Rossville, *ib.*; his retreat about 5.30 p. m. to Rossville, 229; the attacks on, in

retreat, repulsed, *ib.*; his new position at Rossville, *ib.*; his great qualities exhibited in resistance of Longstreet, *ib.*; the message carried to Rosecrans by his *aide* not mentioned in his report, *ib.*; the question of the message discussed, 229-230, 243-244; the gravity of removal of Wood to his left, 230; his action questioned, *ib.*; his great services 181-182; saved the Army of the Cumberland from destruction, 181; Garfield's tribute to, *ib.*; Dana's tribute to, *ib.*; the "Rock of Chickamauga," 182; chosen by Grant, to command Army of the Cumberland, 131, 182, 216, 230; reluctant to accept the command, 182; his loyalty to Rosecrans, *ib.*; the criticism of choice of Grant for supreme control at Chattanooga instead of, discussed, 230, 234; his achievements compared with Grant's, *ib.*; his solution of problem of supplying army at Chattanooga, 183; his letter to Halleck, Oct. 31, *ib.*; the Confederates dislodged at Brown's Ferry, *ib.*; the restraint imposed on, under Grant, 183.

Battle of Missionary Ridge, Nov. 23-25, 1863; the plan of battle communicated to, Nov. 18, 184, 234; the attack delayed, 184; given command of centre and right at Missionary Ridge, 185, 234; ordered to co-operate with Sherman, 184, 234-235; ordered, Nov. 23, to ascertain if Bragg was retreating, 184; captured Orchard Knob, Nov. 23, 184, 235; gained position to assault the ridge, 184; instructed to move early morning, Nov. 25, 235; and to carry enemy's rifle-pits, *ib.*, 236; to create a diversion for Sherman's benefit, 132; his attack on rifle-pits not intended as a diversion in favor of Sherman, 236; Baird sent to re-enforce Sherman by, *ib.*; Baird not being required, formed on left of, *ib.*; informed Sherman of his position at 1 p. m., *ib.*; his troops without orders captured Missionary Ridge, 33, 132, 133, 184, 185, 186, 236; if the charge was not ordered by him, it was the effect of his influence, 186; the assertion that the spirit which inspired the assault was due to his influence questioned, 237; the troops who made assault were not of his corps, *ib.*; evidence that

Grant intended an assault on the Ridge, *ib.*, 237; one of his staff gave order to Baird to carry rifle-pits, and to push on to summit of Ridge, *ib.*; the assertion that Grant intended Sherman to take chief part in battle questioned, *ib.*; his attack and Sherman's intended to be concurrent, *ib.*; the total strength of Confederates, 238; Sherman's and Grant's statements that the lines were weakened in front of, disproved, 186; the strength of forces opposed to him, 185; the Confederate strength opposed to Sherman less than that opposed to, 186, 238; his strength at Mission Ridge, 185; inferior to Sherman's, 186; superior to Sherman's, 237; the strength of each, *ib.*; his loss, 33, 185-186; the defensive works opposed to him, 185; his statement as to modification of plan, *ib.*; the statements of Grant and Sherman as to the duty of, at Missionary Ridge, distrusted, 132, 133; sustained, 237-238.

Atlanta Campaign: Sherman preferred for command of Division of the Mississippi instead of, 187, the proposition that the command should have been given to, discussed, 239; that he had held greater responsibilities prior to March 12, 1864, than Sherman, questioned, 233; Sherman his junior, 187; under Sherman's command, 1864, 135; his proposition of Feb. 28, for a movement to Atlanta, 187-188; adopted by Sherman, who bungled in executing it, *ib.*; the plan properly executed would have been successful, 135, 187; the interests of his army sacrificed by Sherman for benefit of his own, 187; given the hardest work to do, 189; the assault at Jonesboro', *ib.*, 190; in all the battles of the Atlanta campaign except that of July 22, 189; excluded from that affair because of jealousy of Army of the Tennessee, *ib.*; enumeration of battles and engagements in which he participated, 190; his successful affair with Hood at Peach Tree Creek, *ib.*; the affair slightly noticed by Sherman, *ib.*; Sherman's prejudice against, *ib.*; his plan of a march to the sea adopted by Sherman, 191.

Tennessee campaign: sent to Tennessee to expel Forrest, 139, 191; the destruction of Hood's army as-

signed by Sherman to, 134, 140, 141, 142, 191; the proposition that the national cause in Tennessee was imperilled by the Georgia campaign of 1864, discussed, 240 *et seq.*; Sherman's two weakest corps given to, 191; the paucity of the forces assigned to, 142, 144-145, 151; the number of his forces, 240, 240 note 5; Sherman assured by, that he would have men enough, 241; the force sufficient, *ib.*; the strengthening of the army of, condition of consent to Sherman's project against Savannah, 142; not possessed of an army strong enough for his purposes, until Nov. 30, *ib.*, 191; the strength of Hood's army, Nov. 1864, 240, 240 note 5; correspondence with Sherman, 241; communications between, broken Nov. 15, 1864, *ib.*; Sherman's expectations from, 141-142; his confidence in, justified, 152, 242; the difficulties of, unknown to Sherman, 152; the only risk taken by, as to Schofield's position, was of his own choosing, 241; the resources and men of the North available to, 242; defeated Hood in the battle of Franklin, Nov. 30, 142, 143.

Battle of Nashville, Dec. 15-16, 1864: the last of the great victories of, 191; the strategy of the battle, 192; fought according to plan, 257; Hood completely defeated, 143-144, 145, 152; his success unprecedented, 145; prisoners captured, 192; his failure to capture Hood's entire army, 192-193; the conditions different from Grant's after Petersburg, *ib.*; obstacles in pursuit of Hood, 193; failure of his plans for Steedman, *ib.*; his losses in pursuit compared with Grant's in pursuit of Lee, 194; exultation over his victory, 144; favored in his campaign by luck, 143; the disposition to minimize the risk and victory, 152; the victory his chief claim to generalship, 191, 207; compared with other victories, 192; an evidence of the possibilities of an American army, 268; included by Swinton among the decisive battles, 207.

His military record and qualifications: his variety of service, 203; the number of actions in which he took part, *ib.*; his captures of guns and prisoners, *ib.*; his generalship, 204; his employment of cavalry

- against fortified lines, 194; his uses of cavalry, 194-195; never showed the audacity of Caesar and Napoleon, 204; possessed a power over his army like Wellington's, 204-205; also his accuracy of judgment in emergencies, 205; instances of this faculty, 205-206; his attention to details, 199; praise excited by his achievements, 206; thanked by Ohio, after Mill Springs, *ib.*; by Congress after Nashville, *ib.*; by Tennessee, *ib.*; his portrait painted for Tennessee, and a gold medal given him by that state, *ib.*; promoted to rank of Major-General, Dec. 15, 1864, *ib.*; Stanton's letter announcing promotion, *ib.*; the office of Lieut.-Gen. declined by him, 202-203; the Senate requested by him not to confirm the nomination, 203; his attitude towards the presidency, 200-201; his letter of March, 1867, refusing nomination, 201-202; his feelings towards the South, 202; his exercise of power in his military department after the war, *ib.*; his study of U. S. Constitution, 197; present at Reunion of Western Armies at Chicago, 1868, 198; attention commanded by him at *ib.*; his legal acquisitions, 198-199; his power of commanding confidence and affection, 195-196; his recognition of good service, 195; his care for his army, *ib.*; his heroism under physical sufferings, *ib.*; his personal reconnaissances, *ib.*; his skill in wood craft, *ib.*, 196; his fearlessness and indifference to danger, 196; imperturbable and self-contained, *ib.*; not given to display, *ib.*; consideration for others, *ib.*, 197; his control of a violent temper, *ib.*; his humanity, *ib.*; his gentleness, dignity, humor, *ib.*; his scholarly traits, *ib.*; his dislike of slavery, *ib.*; his liberation of his slaves, 198; his personal habits, 199-200; his temperance, 199; his personal appearance, 200; compared with Grant, Sherman and Sheridan, 203, 204; with McClellan, 122; with Humphreys, 95; his glory obscured by Grant's and Sherman's, 207; the lack of good relations a disadvantage to Grant, 178; made by Grant to suffer for the faults of Halleck, *ib.*; Grant's imperfect knowledge of, 206; Grant's comments on, cited, 206-207; thought by Grant less competent than Sherman for command of Atlanta campaign, 206-207; contrary opinion entertained, 207; Grant's praise of, *ib.*; Grant's prejudice against, 184; the charge of a prejudice questioned and discussed, 215-216; no evidence of prejudice, 216; 238; the claims made to the disparagement of Grant and Sherman, examined, 211-244; the claims stated, 211-212; tested by the Official Records, 212 *et seq.*
- Thruston, Bvt. Brig.-Gen., U. S. V., Judge Advocate, Thomas' staff, cited as to the General's legal acquisitions, 198-199.
- Tilghman, L., Brig.-Gen., C. S. A., his escape from Fort Henry, 25.
- Totopotomoy River, Va., 61, 87.
- Turchin, J. B., Brig.-Gen., U. S. V., his statement as to fatal message to Rosecrans at Chickamauga, cited, 229.
- Twentieth Corps, U. S. A., its strength under McCook at Chickamauga, Sept. 19-20, 1863, 225; at engagement of Peach Tree Creek, July 20, 1864, 190.
- Twenty-third Corps, U. S. A., under Schofield, re-enforced Sherman at Goldsboro', March 25, 1865, 145.
- Twiggs, D. E., Maj.-Gen., C. S. A., Thomas at Monterey, praised by, 168; surrendered U. S. forces to Texas, Feb. 23, 1861, 172.
- Underwood, A. B., Bvt. Maj.-Gen., U. S. V., wounded in affair of Look-out Valley, Oct. 29, 1863, 183.
- United States, the people not military, 248; their comprehension of military situation, 1862, 250; Lincoln, the wisest and most sagacious statesman in the history of, 251-252.
- , Northern States: realization of the magnitude of the war, after the first Bull Run, in, 248; the people trained in large affairs, *ib.*; ample provision for the support of Govt., 249; preparations for defence, *ib.*; recruiting in, stopped, April, 1862, 250; the Governors of, counselled a call for 300,000 men, 250-251; their vast resources, 251; their capabilities in the ingenious utilization of steam and electricity, 271.
- , Southern States: want of familiarity with large affairs in, 249; careless confidence of success and contempt of their adversaries in, *ib.*; not daunted by disasters of

1862. *ib.*; their military strength wholly employed, *ib.*; their patient endurance under deprivation of comforts, *ib.*; the merits of their generals, 250; unwilling to accept defeat, *ib.*; western forces united under A. S. Johnson in March, 1862, *ib.*
- , Congress, Thomas thanked by, after Nashville, 206; indifference of, to the artillery service, 263.
- , Government: failure to comprehend, 1861, the magnitude of the war, 247, 268; did not heed Sherman's sagacious advice, 248; its plans disconcerted by Stonewall Jackson, 250; for sake of economy stopped recruiting, April, 1862, *ib.*; the need of re-enforcements, July, 1862, *ib.*; unwilling consent to call for 300,000 men, *ib.*, 251; its unnecessary extravagance, *ib.*; its lack of sound military direction, 255; the incredulity of foreign nations as to its success in the war, 268; the problems it was called on to solve, *ib.*; the advantage of modern scientific agencies to, 269-270; its employment of steam-vessels, *ib.*; of the electric telegraph, 270; of railroads, *ib.*; a navy created for blockade, by, 271; a navy created to operate in southern rivers, *ib.*; blockade made reasonably effective, *ib.*; Thomas unknown to, April 16, 1861, 171; effect on, of his victory at Logan's Cross Roads, Jan., 1862, 177; surmise of prejudice against Thomas, because of his inactivity at Perryville, Oct. 8, 1862, 216; Rosecrans chosen to succeed Buell, 217; Halleck made General-in-Chief by, 27, 233; scheme of, to make McClelland commander of Mississippi expedition, 1862, 28, 29, 30; Grant's victory at Vicksburg caused him to be given command of Military Division of Mississippi by, 234.
- United States Military Academy, West Point, N. Y.: Jefferson Davis a cadet at, 1824-1828, 252; W. S. Hancock a cadet at, 1840-1844, 51; A. A. Humphreys, a cadet at, 1827-1831, 75; W. T. Sherman, a cadet at, 1836-1840, 128; G. H. Thomas, a cadet at, 1836-1840, 167; Instructor of Cavalry and Artillery at, 1851-1854, 169; distinguished class under him, 169-170; its non-military graduates, 75; Cullum's Biographical Register of Officers and Graduates of, 75, 76, 203.
- United States, U. S. man-of-war, built by D. Humphreys, 74.
- Upton, E., Bvt. Maj.-Gen., U. S. A., compared with Humphreys, 95; his great tactical ability, *ib.*
- Utah, expedition to, under A. S. Johnston, 1857, 171.
- Valley Forge, Pa., 165.
- Van Cleve, H. P., Brig.-Gen. U. S. V., a cadet at West Point, 1827-1831, 75; in command of 3d division, left wing, at Stone's River, ordered to re-enforce right wing, Dec. 31, 1862, 218; ordered to support Thomas at Chickamauga, Sept. 20, 225; a brigade of his division carried away by Hood, 227; the strength of that brigade, *ib.*; in the line formed to resist Longstreet's attack, 228.
- Van Horne, T. B., Chaplain, U. S. A., his History of the Army of the Cumberland published prior to the Memoirs of Grant and Sherman, 212; his Life of Thomas published in 1882, 112 note; silent as to bearer of fatal message at Chickamauga, 229, 230.
- Vaughan Road, Va., engagement, Feb. 5-7, 1865, 90.
- Veazey, W. G., Col. U. S. V., his regiment, 16th Vermont, at Cemetery Ridge, July 3, 1863, 49.
- Vermont Volunteers, 13th and 16th regts. at Cemetery Ridge, July 13, 1863, 50.
- Veteran regiments, the importance of preserving organizations disregarded, 265; the organizations preserved by Wisconsin and Illinois, *ib.*
- Vicksburg, Miss., the Mississippi River opened to, 1862, 249; Williams' attempt to capture, 1862, 27; batteries run by Farragut, 27-28; canal scheme abandoned, 28; Sherman's unsuccessful expedition to, Dec., 1862, 204, 239; discussion of Grant's plans against, 27-32; their indefiniteness, 31, 39; his operations at, Dec., 1862-Jan., 1863, 233; his operations April-July, 1863, 233-234; routes to, 28; route chosen by Grant, 30; surrendered, July 4, 1863, 32, 264; Grant's losses in the campaign, 34; won by superior strategy, 131; conditions for captures at, compared with those of Nashville, 192; conjecture as to results had Johnston commanded at, 256; Sherman's services in the campaign, 239.

- Victoria, U. S. gunboat, 103.
- Vining's Station, Ga., Thomas in engagement of, 190.
- Vinton, F., Rev., a cadet at West Point, 1826-1830, 75.
- Virginia, Thomas born in, 165; its suffering in War of 1812, 165; Presidents provided by, *ib.*; statesmen provided by, 166; the number of men from, in the U. S. Army Jan., 1861, who remained in service, Jan., 1862, 166; Lee's devotion to, though deprecating secession, 166; prior to Thomas, no cadet from his district had been graduated at West Point, 167; Stonewall Jackson's successful operations in, 250; re-enforcements sent to Bragg in Tennessee from, 220; 230; Longstreet recalled to, after Missionary Ridge, 266; operations against Charleston discontinued for sake of 1864 campaign in, 10; Grant's neglect of details in the battles of May and June, 1864, in, 257.
- Virginia volunteers, under Longstreet re-enforced Bragg in Tennessee, 131; defeated by Thomas, at Chickamauga, 181, 182; their loss, 182; the flower of Lee's army, *ib.*
- Wade, R. D. A., Capt., U. S. A., mentioned Thomas in his report, Seminole War, 168.
- Wadsworth, J. S., Brig.-Gen., U. S. V., his report of forces left for defence of Washington, 110; in the Wilderness, May 6, 1864, 62.
- Wales, Gen. Humphreys' family came from, 77; Gen. Thomas', also, 167; its people not conquered by Cæsar, *ib.*
- Walker, F. A., Bvt. Brig.-Gen. U. S. V., concerned in episode of July 28, 1865, at Deep Bottom, 64; consideration received when a prisoner of war, from A. P. Hill, 67; 83; his History of the Second Army Corps, 94.
- Walker, W. H. T., Maj.-Gen., C. S. A., his strength, Sept. 18, 225; his losses, Sept. 19-20, *ib.*; attacked Thomas under Polk, Sept. 20, Chickamauga, *ib.*; estimate of his artillery at battle of Missionary Ridge, 237 note 1, mentioned, *ib.*, note 4.
- Wallace, L., Maj.-Gen., U. S. V., in command of 3d division, Army of the Tennessee, engaged at Shiloh, April 7, 1862, 231.
- War Department, its publication, Tactical Study of the Battlefield of Chickamauga, 220, 230, 230 note 1, 243, 244; dissatisfied with Rosecrans, after Chickamauga, 182.
- Warren, G. K., Bvt. Maj.-Gen., U. S. A., his delay and disaster on White Oak Road, March 31, 91; his services in ending the war, 67.
- Washburne, E. B., Member of Congress, the early recognition of Grant's merits due to, 166.
- Washington, D. C., Bureau of Topographical Engineers, 76; bridge built by Humphreys at, 76-77; Beauregard's plan, July, 1861, against, 5, 6; in Sept., 7; question of the defence of, 1862, 107-113; McClellan's insufficient provision for, 107, 108, 110; Banks not available for, 107-108; McClellan's belief that he had saved, 118, 119; Humphreys hurried to Antietam from, 80; Stuart passed between Union army and, in advance of Gettysburg, 160; U. S. Government at, see U. S. Government.
- Washington, George, 134, 165; appointed D. Humphreys, U. S. naval constructor, 74.
- Webb, A. S., Bvt. Maj.-Gen., U. S. A., at Cemetery Ridge, July 3, 1863, 51; succeeded Humphreys as Chief-of-Staff to Meade, 89.
- Weldon, N. C., Beauregard at, April 22, 1864, 10.
- Weldon and Petersburg, Railroad, affairs at, 1865, 87; Lee's supply-line, 90; captured, *ib.*
- Wellington, Thomas' power over his army and accuracy of judgment in emergencies like, 204-205.
- West Point, N. Y., U. S. Military Academy at, see U. S. Military Academy.
- West Point, Va., in McClellan's plans, 117.
- West Virginia, in Beauregard's plan, 1861, 6.
- Wheeler, J., Maj.-Gen., C. S. A., his operations, Sept., 1864, 138.
- White's Ferry on Potomac, Stuart crossed at, returning from Oct., 1862, raid, 158.
- White House, on Pamunkey, McClellan's base of supplies, 116.
- White Oak Road, Va., engagement of March 31, 1865, 91.
- Whiting, W. H. C., Maj.-Gen., C. S. A., Petersburg occupied by, May, 1864, 11; in Beauregard's plans, *ib.*; failed, *ib.*



- Whittlesey, C., Col., U. S. V., a cadet at West Point, 1827-1831, 75.
- Wilderness, Va., battle of, 35; severity of fighting, 35, 40; Humphreys' criticism of advance to, 87; Union left wing commanded by Hancock, 52; his services in, May 5 and 6, 1864, 62; Stuart's service in the campaign brief, 162; 61, 87.
- Williams, T., Brig.-Gen., U. S. V., his attempt to capture Vicksburg, 1862, 27; his canal scheme abandoned, 28; his return to Baton Rouge, *ib.*
- Williamsburg, Va., battle of May 5, 1862, Hancock at, 53; Hill and Early defeated by Hancock at, 56; Union loss at, 34.
- Williamsport, Pa., 158; Patterson crossed the Potomac at, July 2, 1861, 173.
- Wilmington, N. C., Cornwallis' retirement to, after battle of Guilford C. H., 145; troops called to Richmond from, May, 1864, 11; its abandonment advocated, 1865, by Beauregard, 18; evacuated, 19.
- Wilson, J. H., Bvt. Maj.-Gen., U. S. A., in command of cavalry, Military Division of the Mississippi, with Thomas in Tennessee, 191; his force, 240; Forrest defeated by, at Franklin, 194; his raids in 1864, in Alabama and Georgia, 260; 90.
- Wilson, W. P., Col., U. S. V., on Hancock's staff, 57.
- Winchester, Va., in Grant's 1865 plans for Sheridan, 259.
- Windmill Point, James River, 2d Corps crossed at, May 14, 1864, 14.
- Wirt, W., Attorney-General, a Virginian, 166.
- Wisconsin, maintained its regimental organizations through the war, 265.
- Wise, H. A., Brig.-Gen., C. S. A., his brigade at Petersburg, June, 1864, 14.
- Wofford, W. T., Brig.-Gen., C. S. A., his brigade not present at Chickamauga, 228 note.
- Wood, T. J., Brig.-Gen., U. S. V., in command of 1st division, 21st Corps, his position Sept. 20, at battle of Chickamauga, 226; victim of unfortunate message, *ib.*; ordered by Thomas to his extreme left, 227; his withdrawal left the gap for Hood, *ib.*; his losses from Hood's assault, *ib.*; formed new line with Brannan and Van Cleve, to resist Longstreet, 228; censured for obeying order, 229; the propriety of Thomas' order to him questioned, 230; in command of 3d division, 4th Corps, his forces participated in the capture of Orchard Knob, Nov. 23, 1863, 184; in assault and capture of Missionary Ridge, Nov. 25, 237; his share of victory at Chattanooga, 133.
- Wool, J. E., Maj.-Gen., U. S. A., Thomas at Buena Vista mentioned by, 169.
- Worth, W. J., Bvt. Maj.-Gen., U. S. A., Thomas mentioned by, in his report, Seminole War, 168.
- Wright, H. G., Maj.-Gen., U. S. A., in command of 6th Corps, 90; the defences before Petersburg captured by, April 2, 1865, *ib.*; at Farmville, night of April 7, 94; in pursuit of Lee, April, 8, *ib.*; his services in ending the war, 67.
- Wright, M. J., Brig.-Gen., C. S. A., in battle of Missionary Ridge, 238, note 1, note 2.
- Yallobusha River, Miss., available in an advance on Vicksburg, 28; 29.
- Yazoo River, Miss., available for protection in advance on Vicksburg, 28.
- Yellow Tavern, Va., engagements at, 1864, 157; Stuart mortally wounded at, 162.
- York River, Va., promise of the Navy Dept. that the Merrimac should not enter, 101, 102; McClellan's dependence on, for communication with Fort Monroe, 105; his reason for taking it as a line of action, 116.
- Yorktown, Va., Thomas' birthplace near, 165; McClellan's plan for naval co-operation in reduction of, 101; his ignorance concerning, 102; vessels not promised to attack, *ib.*, 103, 104, 105, 106, 110; mentioned, 112, 115.
- Young's Point, La., Grant's uncertainties at, 31.
- Yuma, Fort, see Fort Yuma.
- Zolicoffer, F. K., Brig.-Gen., C. S. A., in position before Mill Springs, Dec. 2, 1861, 213; Thomas' movement against, *ib.*; in battle of Logan's Cross Roads, Jan. 19, 1862, 176-177, 191, 204, 205, 206, 211, 214; killed, 176, 214.
- Zook, S. K., Brig.-Gen., U. S. V., in 1st division, 2d Corps, 59; at Fredericksburg, 1862, *ib.*



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CASPAR CROWNINSHIELD,

Brevet Brigadier-General, U. S. V.

Colonel, Second Massachusetts Cavalry.

GREELY STEVENSON CURTIS,

Brevet Brigadier-General, U. S. V.  
Lieutenant-Colonel, First Massachusetts Cavalry.

HENRY ROGERS DALTON,

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LORIN FULLER DELAND, Esq.

\* CHARLES DEVENS, LL. D.

Brevet Major-General, U. S. V.  
Brigadier-General, U. S. V.  
Attorney-General of the United States ; Justice, Supreme Court of Massachusetts. Died January 7, 1891.

THEODORE AYRAULT DODGE,

Brevet Colonel, U. S. V.  
Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel, U. S. A.  
Captain, U. S. A. Retired.

HENRY GUSTAVUS DORR,

First Lieutenant, Fourth Massachusetts Cavalry, U. S. V.

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Brevet Brigadier-General, U. S. V.  
Lieutenant-Colonel, Thirty-sixth Massachusetts Infantry.

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Lieutenant-Colonel, Twenty-fourth Massachusetts Infantry.

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CHARLES FAIRCHILD,

Assistant Paymaster, U. S. N., 1864.

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Major, Second Massachusetts Infantry.

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Brevet Major-General, U. S. V.  
Brigadier-General, U. S. V. Died August 30, 1886.

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Royall Professor of Law, Harvard University.

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\* EDWARD JACKSON LOWELL, Esq.

Died May 11, 1894.

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SILAS MARCUS MACVANE,

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Captain, Third Massachusetts Battery.

\* HERBERT COWPLAND MASON,

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WILLIAM HENRY OSBORNE,

Private, Twenty-ninth Massachusetts Infantry, U. S. V.

\* FRANCIS WINTHROP PALFREY,

Brevet Brigadier-General, U. S. V.  
Colonel, Twentieth Massachusetts Infantry. Died December 6, 1889.

JOHN CARVER PALFREY,

Brevet Brigadier-General, U. S. A.  
Captain Corps of Engineers, U. S. A., 1863-1866.  
Chief Engineer, Thirteenth Army Corps.

FRANCIS EVERETT PEABODY, Esq.

FRANCIS HOWARD PEABODY, Esq.

CHARLES LAWRENCE PEIRSON,

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Lieutenant-Colonel, Thirty-ninth Massachusetts Infantry.

\* WILLIAM EDWARD PERKINS,

Captain, Second Massachusetts Infantry, U. S. V. Died January 23, 1879.

HENRY GODDARD PICKERING, Esq.

CHARLES HUNT PORTER,

First Lieutenant, Thirty-ninth Massachusetts Infantry, U. S. V.

\* SAMUEL ALFRED PORTER,

Brevet Brigadier-General, U. S. V.  
Brevet Major and Captain, U. S. A. Retired. Died April 21, 1880.

## \* WILLIAM PRATT,

Captain and Assistant Adjutant-General, U. S. V. Died March 29, 1893.

GEORGE PUTNAM, Esq.

## \* SAMUEL MILLER QUINCY,

Brevet Brigadier-General, U. S. V.

Colonel Eighty-first U. S. Colored Troops. Died March 24, 1887.

ARNOLD AUGUSTUS RAND,

Colonel, Fourth Massachusetts Cavalry, U. S. V.

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MAURICE HOWE RICHARDSON, M. D.

ANDREW ROBESON,

Brevet Major, U. S. V.

Captain, First New York Engineers.

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Brevet Captain, U. S. V.

First Lieutenant, Twentieth Massachusetts Infantry.

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Acting Assistant Paymaster, U. S. N., 1862-1865.

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Colonel, Fifth Massachusetts Cavalry.

## \* WILLIAM GURDON SALTONSTALL,

Acting Volunteer Lieutenant-Commander, U. S. N. Died July 21, 1889.

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Brevet Major, U. S. V.

Captain and Aide-de-Camp, U. S. V.

Arnold Professor of Arboriculture, and Director of the Arnold Arboretum,  
Harvard University.

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Professor of Geology and Dean of the Lawrence Scientific School, Harvard University.

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Lieutenant-Colonel, Twenty-second Massachusetts Infantry.

WILLIAM PRICE SHREVE,

Brevet Major, U. S. V.

First Lieutenant, Second U. S. Sharpshooters.

\* HIRAM SMITH SHURTLEFF,

Captain, Fifty-sixth Massachusetts Infantry, U. S. V. Died December 11, 1893.

\* JACOB HENRY SLEEPER,

Brevet Major, U. S. V.

Captain, Tenth Massachusetts Battery. Died August 19, 1891.

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Lieutenant, U. S. N. Retired. Resigned membership.

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Captain, Seventeenth Infantry, U. S. A.

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Professor of Political Economy, Harvard College. Resigned membership.

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## \* ADIN BALLOU UNDERWOOD,

Brevet Major-General, U. S. V.  
Brigadier-General, U. S. V. Died January 14, 1888.

## \* CHARLES FOLSOM WALCOTT,

Brevet Brigadier-General, U. S. V.  
Colonel, Sixty-first Massachusetts Infantry. Died June 11, 1887.

## FRANCIS AMASA WALKER, PH. D., LL. D.,

Brevet Brigadier-General, U. S. V.  
Lieutenant-Colonel and Assistant Adjutant-General, U. S. V.  
President of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

## STEPHEN MINOT WELD,

Brevet Brigadier-General, U. S. V.  
Colonel, Fifty-sixth Massachusetts Infantry.

## CHARLES ALBERT WHITTIER,

Brevet Brigadier-General, U. S. V.  
Lieutenant-Colonel and Assistant Adjutant-General, U. S. V.  
Captain, Seventeenth and Nineteenth Infantry, U. S. A., 1866-1870.

## EDWARD NEWTON WHITTIER, M. D.,

Brevet Captain, U. S. V.  
First Lieutenant, Fifth Maine Battery. Acting Inspector-General of Artillery.

## \* HENRY WINSOR, JR.,

Captain Sixth Pennsylvania Cavalry, Acting Assistant Inspector-General.  
Died August 28, 1894.

## CORRESPONDING MEMBERS.

---

\* WILLIAM ALLAN,

Lieutenant-Colonel of Artillery, C. S. A.  
Chief of Ordnance, Second Corps, Army of Northern Virginia.  
Died September 17, 1889.

ARCHER ANDERSON,

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ELISHA BENJAMIN ANDREWS, D. D., LL. D.

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JOHN RUTTER BROOKE,

Brigadier-General, U. S. A.  
Brevet Major-General, U. S. V. Brigadier-General, U. S. V.

\* HENRY ARMITT BROWN,

Died August 21, 1878.

CORNELIUS CADLE,

Brevet Colonel, U. S. V.  
Lieutenant-Colonel and Assistant Adjutant-General, Seventeenth Army  
Corps.

JOSHUA LAWRENCE CHAMBERLAIN, LL. D.,

Brevet Major-General, U. S. V. Brigadier-General, U. S. V.  
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Formerly President of Bowdoin College.

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Second Lieutenant, Fifth Artillery, U. S. A., 1870-1882.

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Brigadier-General, U. S. V.  
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Commandant, Twenty-third Army Corps.

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Major and Judge Advocate, U. S. A.  
In charge of publication of the War Records.

\*EPHRAIM CUTLER DAWES,

Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel, U. S. V.  
Major, Fifty-third Ohio Infantry. Died April 23, 1895.

GEORGE DEWEY,

Captain, U. S. N.

HENRY KYD DOUGLAS,

Colonel, Thirteenth and Forty-ninth Virginia Infantry, C. S. A.

GEORGE BERNARD DRAKE,

Brevet Brigadier-General, U. S. V.  
Lieutenant-Colonel and Assistant Adjutant General, U. S. V.  
First Lieutenant, Sixth Infantry, U. S. A., 1864-1865.

HENRY ALGERNON Du PONT,

Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel, U. S. A.  
Captain, Fifth Artillery, U. S. A., 1864-1875.

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Lieutenant-Commander, U. S. N.

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Colonel, Corps of Engineers, U. S. A.

Superintendent of the U. S. Military Academy, West Point, N. Y.

## LUCIUS FAIRCHILD,

Brigadier-General, U. S. V.

Captain, Sixteenth Infantry, U. S. A., 1861-1863.

Governor of the State of Wisconsin, E. E. and M. P. of the United States to Spain, 1880-1882.

## DANIEL WEBSTER FLAGLER,

Brigadier-General, U. S. A.

Chief of Ordnance Department, U. S. A.

## CHARLES WILLIAM FOLSOM,

Brevet Colonel, U. S. V.

Captain and Assistant Quartermaster, U. S. V.

## MANNING FERGUSON FORCE,

Brevet Major-General, U. S. V.

Brigadier-General, U. S. V.

## \* GUSTAVUS VASA FOX,

Captain, U. S. N.

Assistant Secretary, Navy Department, 1861-1866. Died October 29, 1883.

## WILLIAM BUEL FRANKLIN,

Major-General, U. S. V.

## \* JAMES BARNET FRY,

Brevet Major-General, U. S. A.

Colonel and Assistant Adjutant-General, U. S. A. Died July 11, 1894.

## JOSEPH SCOTT FULLERTON,

Brevet Brigadier-General, U. S. V.

Lieutenant-Colonel and Assistant Adjutant-General, U. S. V.

## GEORGE RIGGS GAITHER,

Captain, First Virginia Cavalry, C. S. A.

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Captain and Aide-de-Camp.

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Major, Twenty-ninth Maine Infantry, U. S. V.

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Commander, U. S. N.

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Brevet Major-General, U. S. V.

Brigadier-General, U. S. V.

EUGENE GRIFFIN,

Captain, Corps of Engineers, U. S. A., 1886-1889.

SIMON GOODELL GRIFFIN,

Brevet Major-General, U. S. V.

Brigadier-General, U. S. V.

\* WINFIELD SCOTT HANCOCK,

Major-General, U. S. A. Died February 9, 1886.

ALFRED STEDMAN HARTWELL,

Brevet Brigadier-General, U. S. V.

Colonel Fifty-fifth Massachusetts Infantry.

HARRY LEROY HAWTHORNE,

First Lieutenant, First Artillery, U. S. A.

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- \* ANDREW ATKINSON HUMPHREYS,  
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- \* HENRY JACKSON HUNT,  
Brevet Major-General, U. S. A.  
Chief of Artillery, Army of the Potomac.  
Brigadier-General, U. S. V. Died February 11, 1889.
- \* ROBERT HUNTER,  
Captain, Seventy-fourth Ohio Volunteers. Died December 2, 1894.
- THOMAS WORCESTER HYDE,  
Brevet Brigadier-General, U. S. V.  
Colonel, First Maine Veteran Volunteers.
- JOHN WILLIAM JONES, D. D.  
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War Department, Washington, D. C.
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\* IRVIN McDOWELL,

Major-General, U. S. A. Died May 4, 1885.

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\* MONTGOMERY CUNNINGHAM MEIGS,

Brevet Major-General, U. S. A.

Quartermaster-General, U. S. A. Died January 2, 1892.

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Brigadier-General, U. S. V. Died April 25, 1884.

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Chief of Staff of Major-General Rousseau.

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\* LE COMTE DE PARIS,

Died September 8, 1894.

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Adjutant-General, U. S. A. Died May 10, 1893.

CHARLES SCOTT VENABLE,

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JOHN GRIMES WALKER,

Rear-Admiral, U. S. N.

\* GOUVERNEUR KEMBLE WARREN,

Brevet Major-General, U. S. A. Died August 8, 1882.

ALEXANDER STEWART WEBB, LL. D.

Brevet Major-General, U. S. A. and U. S. V.  
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## REPORTS AND PAPERS.

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SINCE its organization, reports and papers have been read before the Society on the following subjects:—

### *OPERATIONS IN THE SHENANDOAH VALLEY, 1861 AND 1862.*

1. PATTERSON'S CAMPAIGN, 1861.

COLONEL THOMAS L. LIVERMORE.

2. CAMPAIGN AGAINST JACKSON, FROM WINCHESTER TO PORT REPUBLIC, 1862.

BY MAJOR JAMES F. HUNTINGTON.

### *THE PENINSULAR CAMPAIGN OF McCLELLAN IN 1862.*

1. GENERAL McCLELLAN'S PLANS FOR THE CAMPAIGN OF 1862, AND THE ALLEGED INTERFERENCE OF THE GOVERNMENT WITH THEM.

JOHN C. ROPES, Esq.

2. THE SIEGE OF YORKTOWN.

GENERAL JOHN C. PALFREY.

3. THE PERIOD WHICH ELAPSED BETWEEN THE FALL OF YORKTOWN AND THE SEVEN-DAYS' BATTLES.

GENERAL FRANCIS W. PALFREY.

4. THE SEVEN-DAYS' BATTLES:—

Mechanicsville,  
Gaines's Mill,  
White Oak Swamp,  
Glendale.

GENERAL FRANCIS W. PALFREY.

5. THE SEVEN-DAYS' BATTLES:—

Malvern Hill.

GENERAL FRANCIS W. PALFREY.

6. COMMENTS ON THE PENINSULAR CAMPAIGN.

GENERAL CHARLES A. WHITTIER.

The foregoing form Volume 1 of the Society's Publications.

## GENERAL POPE'S CAMPAIGN IN VIRGINIA IN 1862.

1. THE CHARACTER OF GENERAL HALLECK'S MILITARY ADMINISTRATION IN THE SUMMER OF 1862; WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE REMOVAL, BY HIS ORDER, OF THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC FROM THE PENINSULA, AND TO THE SHARE WHICH BELONGS TO HIM IN THE CAMPAIGN OF GENERAL POPE.

GENERAL SAMUEL M. QUINCY.

## THE OBJECTS AND GENERAL PLAN OF CAMPAIGN.

2. FIRST PART, TO THE NINETEENTH OF AUGUST.  
LIEUTENANT-COLONEL CHARLES P. HORTON.
3. SECOND PART, TO THE TWENTY-EIGHTH OF AUGUST.  
JOHN C. ROPES, Esq.
4. THIRD PART, TO THE END OF THE CAMPAIGN.  
JOHN C. ROPES, Esq.
5. THE TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY OF AUGUST.  
GENERAL GEORGE H. GORDON.
6. THE BATTLE OF CHIANTILLY, FIRST OF SEPTEMBER.  
GENERAL CHARLES F. WALCOTT.
7. THE NUMBERS OF THE TWO ARMIES.  
COLONEL WILLIAM ALLAN.
8. THE CASE OF FITZ-JOHN PORTER.  
GENERAL STEPHEN M. WELD.
9. THE CONDUCT OF GENERAL McCLELLAN AT ALEXANDRIA IN AUGUST, 1862; THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF HIS COMMAND; AND HIS ALLEGED NEGLECT TO SUPPORT THE ARMY OF GENERAL POPE.  
LIEUTENANT-COLONEL FRANKLIN HAVEN, JUN.
10. THE SAME SUBJECT.  
GENERAL STEPHEN M. WELD.
11. REVIEW OF THE REPORTS OF COLONEL HAVEN AND GENERAL WELD.  
COLONEL THEODORE LYMAN.

12. THE CONDUCT OF GENERALS McCLELLAN AND HALLECK IN AUGUST, 1862,  
AND THE CASE OF FITZ-JOHN PORTER.

COLONEL THOMAS L. LIVERMORE.

13. THE HEARING IN THE CASE OF FITZ-JOHN PORTER.

JOHN C. ROPES, Esq.

14. THE BATTLE OF CEDAR MOUNTAIN, AUGUST NINTH, 1862.

GENERAL GEORGE L. ANDREWS.

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*THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC UNDER McCLELLAN AND  
BURNSIDE, SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER, 1862.*

1. THE BATTLE OF ANTIETAM.

GENERAL FRANCIS W. PALFREY.

2. THE ALLEGED DELAY IN THE CONCENTRATION OF THE ARMY OF THE  
POTOMAC, AND THE REASONS WHY THE SECOND CORPS DID NOT ENTER  
INTO THE ACTION EARLIER ON THE DAY OF THE BATTLE.

MAJOR JOHN C. GRAY.

3. STRATEGY OF THE CAMPAIGN OF SHARPSBURG, OR ANTIETAM.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL WILLIAM ALLAN.

4. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN NORTHERN VIRGINIA, FROM THE FIRST TO  
FOURTEENTH DAYS OF NOVEMBER.

GENERAL WILLIAM F. SMITH.

5. FREDERICKSBURG, DECEMBER ELEVENTH TO FIFTEENTH.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL WILLIAM ALLAN.

6. THE LEFT GRAND DIVISION AT FREDERICKSBURG, DECEMBER THIRTEENTH,  
1862.

GENERAL WILLIAM F. SMITH.

*THE CAMPAIGN OF CHANCELLORSVILLE UNDER HOOKER, 1863.*

1. THE DISASTER TO THE ELEVENTH CORPS AT CHANCELLORSVILLE.

COLONEL THEODORE A. DODGE.

2. THE FIGHT OF SUNDAY, MAY THIRD, AT CHANCELLORSVILLE.

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3. SEDGWICK AT CHANCELLORSVILLE.  
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4. THE BATTLE OF CHANCELLORSVILLE.  
COLONEL THEODORE A. DODGE.

These papers, by Colonel Dodge, have been embodied in his book "The Campaign of Chancellorsville."

5. MEADE AT CHANCELLORSVILLE.  
GENERAL ALEXANDER S. WEBB.

6. THE BATTLE OF CHANCELLORSVILLE. (Contributed, but not read by)  
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GENERAL GREELY S. CURTIS.

2. THE CAUSES OF THE CONFEDERATE FAILURE AT GETTYSBURG.  
GENERAL GREELY S. CURTIS.

3. THE STRATEGY OF THE GETTYSBURG CAMPAIGN.  
LIEUTENANT-COLONEL WILLIAM ALLAN.

4. THE LEFT ATTACK (EWELL'S) AT GETTYSBURG.  
CAPTAIN EDWARD N. WHITTIER.

5. PICKETT'S CHARGE.  
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6. THE REGULARS AT GETTYSBURG.  
CAPTAIN RICHARD ROBINS.

7. THE BATTLE OF BRISTOE STATION.  
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This paper has been printed in General Walker's "History of the Second Army Corps."

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1. GRANT'S CAMPAIGN IN VIRGINIA, 1864.  
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2. THE USELESSNESS OF THE MAPS FURNISHED TO THE STAFF OF THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC PREVIOUS TO THE CAMPAIGN OF MAY, 1864.  
COLONEL THEODORE LYMAN.
3. NOTES AND RECOLLECTIONS OF THE OPENING OF THE CAMPAIGN OF 1864.  
LIEUTENANT MCHENRY HOWARD.
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LIEUTENANT-COLONEL WILLIAM W. SWAN.
5. THE SAME SUBJECT.  
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12. THE BATTLE OF COLD HARBOR, JUNE FIRST TO THIRD.  
CAPTAIN CHARLES H. PORTER.
13. SAME SUBJECT.  
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14. THE OPERATIONS OF THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC, FROM THE FIFTH TO FIFTEENTH OF JUNE.  
COLONEL THEODORE LYMAN.
15. THE FAILURE TO TAKE PETERSBURG ON THE FIFTEENTH DAY OF JUNE.  
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16. THE SAME SUBJECT.  
COLONEL THOMAS L. LIVERMORE.
17. THE FAILURE TO TAKE PETERSBURG ON THE SIXTEENTH, SEVENTEENTH,  
AND EIGHTEENTH DAYS OF JUNE.  
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18. THE OPERATIONS AT BERMUDA HUNDRED ON THE SIXTEENTH, SEVEN-  
TEENTH, AND EIGHTEENTH DAYS OF JUNE.  
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1. THE NUMBERS OF GENERAL LEE'S ARMY AT THE OPENING OF THE CAMPAIGN, MARCH TWENTY-FIFTH.  
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